
ATONEME


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ATONEMENT

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT OF CHRISTIANITY

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BY

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AUTHOR OF 'COME TO JESUS,' 'THE LORD'S PRAYER,' 'GETHSEMANE,' ETC., ETC.

'We preach Christ crucified'

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PREFACE

THE study of the Bible and the personal experience of sixty years, more than fifty of which have been spent in the ministry of the Gospel, have convinced me with a constantly increasing assurance, that salvation through the Atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ is not merely an important, but the essential and characteristic feature of Christianity—nay, more, its Fundamental Fact. This has been interwoven with every sermon I have preached, and every book I have written, from *Come to Jesus* to my Jubilee volume, *Divine Brotherhood.*

At the time when the views of the Rev. Frederick Maurice seemed likely to unsettle the faith of some, I selected as the subject of my sermon at the anniversary of the London Missionary Society, in 1856, the great theme of our Missionaries to the Heathen—'We preach Christ crucified.' The sermon, published under the title of *Sacrifice, or Pardon and Purity through the Cross*, has been many years out of print. Opinions expressed in some pulpits and periodicals of the present day have convinced me that there is more need now than formerly for presenting this truth free from exaggerated or inadequate statements, with replies to misrepresentations and objections. I therefore resolved to re-write my booklet. But during two years, the leisure of which has been devoted to the congenial task, further

study of Scripture and careful reading of recent volumes on the same subject have resulted in this little book, the object of which is to present the subject in a simple, condensed, and popular form, so as to assist in its study those who have not access to more learned and elaborate works, or leisure for the perusal of them.

Among such works, to which more or less I gratefully record my obligation for valuable suggestions, and for conscious quotations which in every case I have distinctly acknowledged, are the following:—

The Nature of the Atonement, JOHN M'LEOD CAMPBELL, D.D., 1856. *The Atonement: its Relation to Pardon*, ENOCH MELLOR, D.D., 1859. *Christ and His Salvation*, HORACE BUSHNELL, D.D., 1871. *John the Baptist* (Congregational Lecture), HENRY R. REYNOLDS, D.D., President of Cheshunt College, 1874. *Forgiveness and Law*, HORACE BUSHNELL, D.D., 1874. *The Atonement: in the light of Modern Difficulties* (Hulsean Lectures for 1883, 1884), Rev. J. J. LIAS, M.A., 1884. *Doctrine of the Atonement*, Professor LEWIS EDWARDS, D.D., 1886. *Doctrine of Holy Scripture respecting the Atonement*, Prof. T. J. CRAWFORD, D.D., 1888. *The Redemption of Man*, Prof. D. W. SIMON, Ph.D., 1889. *The Atonement*, W. C. MAGEE, D.D., Archbishop of York, 1889. *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement*, Principal ALFRED CAVE, D.D., 1890: and especially *The Atonement* (Congregational Lecture for 1875), 8vo. and thirteenth Ed. crown 8vo., R. W. DALE, D.D., 1891.

May the blessing of the ever-living Propitiation attend this humble contribution to the great work of strengthening intelligent belief in a doctrine which I increasingly feel to be the 'Fundamental Fact of Christianity.'

ATONEMENT:

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

'JESUS CHRIST and Him crucified,' was the theme of the first Missionary of the Gospel to Europe.

The world was in a state of moral stagnation. Judaism, divinely ordained, having fulfilled its purpose, had become shell without kernel, body without life. Philosophy might be beautiful, but was powerless to purify. St. Paul, coming over from Asia to preach to Europe, proclaimed salvation for a ruined world through a Man who had been crucified as a malefactor, but whom the missionary affirmed to be the Son of God and the only Saviour. He asserted, not simply that this Benefactor had suffered martyrdom, but that this martyrdom was the grand object for which He lived,

by which alone salvation was secured, without which mental culture, philosophy, ethics, cult, or creed could not avail to save mankind from sin, and give assurance of the favour of God and eternal life.

Jews, who were dwelling in every city, and to whom the missionary, as a Jew, made his first appeal, were offended by being told to recognise their promised Messiah in a poor mechanic, trained at no college, invested with no dignity, His chief followers poor fishermen, and Himself put to the most shameful death as a felon. That by Him alone, and not by their own Law of Moses, they could be saved, was to them a 'stumbling-block.'

The Jews 'required a sign'; a miracle so stupendous as to forbid all doubt. Their old religion had been thus certified. Christ performed many quiet miracles of benevolence on earth, but they demanded a 'sign from heaven.' When He fed the multitudes and raised Lazarus they thought that as a Leader He might supply His armies with food, heal the wounded, and restore the slain. Then they wanted to make Him their king. But when He meekly submitted to be bound and condemned, they were disappointed, and in their provocation shouted, 'Crucify Him!' They wanted a carnal Christ, a worldly king; and so the cross became a symbol of delusion, disgrace, defeat,—'a stumbling-block.'

Not less did it appear 'to the Greek foolishness.'

They despised the Jews as a petty, bigoted, exclusive, troublesome tribe of barbarians, in a narrow strip of country, lost to view in the great Empire that ruled them. That a peasant member of this despised race was to be accepted by them as superior to their own Plato or Socrates, be honoured as Ruler as well as Teacher, be trusted as sole Saviour of men, and worshipped as the one and only true incarnation of the Deity—this, to the Greek, was the extravagance of 'foolishness.'

Earliest records tell us that the people generally accounted those to be 'fools who gave rank to One crucified.' They said that 'they who worshipped a crucified man deserved to hang on the cross they adore.' In Rome is a fragment of plaster from the ruins of the barracks of the Prætorian guard which bears traces of a rough caricature, as if scratched by the point of a sword. On a cross is suspended the figure of a man with the head of an ass, before which a soldier is on his knees; and below is the inscription, 'Aleximenos worships his god.'

The Apostolic Missionary was sober in his enthusiasm, and did not needlessly provoke opposition. 'I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some' (1 Cor. ix. 20–22). Unless essential to his mission, he would not emphasize what was likely to hinder it, and close the ears of those he came to teach. Did he therefore keep the fact of the Atoning Sacrifice in the

background, or reserve it for future unfolding? On the contrary, he made it prominent, and at once. It was his dominant theme, the message he felt directed by God to convey. Men might deride, oppose, persecute, but all the more boldly he proclaimed it, emblazoned it on his standard, gave it trumpet-voice, declaring to the cultured Corinthians, 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified' (1 Cor. ii. 2). This was his boast, not his shame. 'Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal. vi. 14). The Jews might demand celestial signs, and the Greeks worldly wisdom, but he was determined to 'preach Christ crucified,—Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. i. 22–25).

History, lauding its heroes of freedom, science, and religion, has taught us to honour rather than be ashamed of those who have endured suffering and scorn for the sake of principle. But that God, incarnated, should stoop so low; that nothing less than the cross should suffice for man's salvation; that all classes should be placed on a common level, needing the same Atonement, by which the most degraded criminal will be accepted, side by side with the seemingly blameless religionist, on repentance and faith; and that whatever we do that is commendable is accepted on the basis of what Christ did and suffered—this is too humbling for human pride.

As breakers of law we are disposed to under-rate the claims of law. Sinners naturally make light of sin, framing excuses for it, sometimes defending it, lessening the peril of it, or altogether denying both its guilt and penalty. 'The unsearchable riches of Christ,' revealed in His sufferings on our behalf, imply a destitution on our part greater than we are willing to acknowledge. Are our stains of so deep a dye that 'the blood of Jesus Christ' is needed to cleanse us? Is our distance from God so great that we can only 'be made nigh in the blood of Christ?' Offence is thus taken at the doctrine of Atonement, which is either denied, or explained as one among other moral influences by which man's sinfulness may be overcome, and he be reconciled to God by amendment of life. Thus salvation is regarded as self-reformation, and not as forgiveness through faith in Him who died for our sins. In many publications and in some pulpits, the Gospel is represented as Moral Influence alone. The object of this book is to enforce the Truth that the Gospel is Atonement for guilt, the basis and the power of righteousness of life.

CHAPTER II.

ATONEMENT MORE THAN MORAL INFLUENCE.

WE do not undertake to support all that has been urged in defence of forgiveness through Atonement, as true to Scripture, honouring to God, or useful to men. As 'science' is not Nature, but only man's conception of it, and therefore liable to error, though the facts of Nature abide unchanged: so theology is only man's conception of revealed truth, and may be open to revision, while its fundamental facts remain stedfast; as the stars, unchanged by the theories which profess to explain their motions. 'Let knowledge grow from more to more'; but let it be knowledge, and not mere opinion; and with opinion let 'sense of reverence in us dwell,' that we exalt not opinion above revelation.

Dr. Dale has forcibly distinguished between the Atonement as a fact and as a theory. The fact is that in connexion with the life and death of Christ sinners are saved, whatever the theory to explain the fact. There are two distinct methods of

viewing this fact—'The ultimate question at issue is whether the sole purpose of the life and death of Christ was to effect a change in the moral and spiritual character of men, and so to restore them to God; or whether there is a direct relation between His death and the remission of sin[1].' As strongly as any who hold the view of moral influence alone, the advocates of Atonement hold that Christ came to draw men *God-ward*; but they also hold that He came to do a work of God *man-ward*; reconciling God to us as the basis and influence for reconciling us to God: so that forgiveness by the cross, and the resultant change in our *condition* as regards God, is precedent to and the instrument of our change in *character*.

The object of this treatise is to repeat and re-echo in brief and simple form what has been more learnedly and exhaustively set forth by others—that salvation by Atonement is the central doctrine, we hesitate not to say the essential *fact*, of Christianity. We consider that on this, as its strong foundation, stands the Church of God. We build on sand if we build elsewhere. This is the groundwork of our assurance of pardon, the source of our spiritual life. This, by the influence of the Divine Spirit, breaks the chains of wickedness, and transforms the slave of the devil into a child of God. This lures us from our guilty hiding-places, to seek the face of Him we shunned, and to cry, 'Abba! Father!' Our plea in

[1] *The Atonement*, by R. W. Dale, D.D. Lect. V.

prayer, our theme in praise, the fountain of our joy, the motive of our obedience, the subject of our preaching, the incentive of our zeal, the bond of our union with God and with men, our victory over death, the basis of our everlasting hopes,—is Jesus Christ 'sacrificed for us.'

My theme therefore has no novelty, being as old as the Gospel itself,—being in truth the very essence of that Gospel. It is fundamental to individual piety, and to all true Christian philanthropy. We live and we labour 'by faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.' The purity, perseverance and success of our efforts for others, will ever be in proportion to the influence which this truth exerts on our hearts, and to the place which it occupies in our teaching. Our zeal will soon cool unless it is inflamed by the sacred fire which burns on this altar; and our ministry, whether at home or in heathen lands, will be but as 'sounding brass,' unless it is the simple, earnest, heartfelt proclamation of the 'faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' All the refinements of philosophy, arrayed in all the fascinations of genius, and urged with all the persuasiveness of eloquence, will be ineffectual in purifying the heart either of civilized or of savage man; while the preaching of the cross will ever be found, in its soul-transforming effects, to be 'Christ, the power of God and wisdom of God.'

'This is the central truth, the denial of which throws the whole fabric of spiritual truth into disintegration and collapse. It sustains the functions of the heart to every other verity in the Christian scheme, giving to it life and power. It is the sun in the heavens of revelation, around which other doctrines revolve, and from which they derive their light. If God has not revealed this fact—that we are saved through the substitutionary work of Christ—He has revealed nothing, or the revelation has been clothed in such deceptive language as to necessitate bewilderment and mistake, and that which should have been a steady lamp to our feet and light to our path, only leads us into quagmires of error and despair [1].'

Let us then appeal 'to the Law and to the Testimony.'

[1] *The Atonement; its relation to Pardon*, p. 4. Enoch Mellor, D.D.

CHAPTER III.

WITNESS OF JEWISH SACRIFICES.

SINCE both Old and New Testaments reveal the mind of the same God, we cannot expect that they teach two methods of salvation totally distinct. As the Creator has in Nature developed His one plan progressively, from lower to loftier types, so we might expect that His method of salvation should be one in all ages, though gradually unfolded. If then substitutionary sacrifice is the great fact and theme of the Gospel, we may expect intimations of it in preceding dispensations; just as we find anticipations of existing forms of vegetable and animal life in the strata of the earth.

The proofs are abundant. Soon after man had fallen by sin Abel offered the firstlings of his flock in sacrifice, 'and the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering' (Gen. iv. 4). May not He Himself have ordained a sacrifice, so unlikely to have been of human invention? 'Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings,' in

deprecation of the displeasure of that holy God who had swept away a wicked race. Its efficacy was indicated in the response—'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake' (Gen. viii. 21). Job 'rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned. Thus did Job continually' (Job i. 5; xlii. 7, 8). Abraham, wherever he pitched his tent, 'builded an altar unto the Lord.' At Moriah, Isaac as one familiar with such oblations, inquired, 'Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' and when Abraham was preparing to offer Isaac, God provided a ram as a substitute. Jacob built altars of sacrifice (Gen. xii. 7, 8; xiii. 18; xxii. 1–14; xxxv. 1–3, 7).

On occasion of the Exodus, a lamb was slain in every Israelitish family, and the blood was sprinkled on the door-post, so that the Angel of Destruction *passed over* such houses, when he slew the first-born of Egypt. This offering of the Paschal lamb was celebrated evermore in the great annual feast of the nation, until Christ, who was put to death at the Passover, changed it into the Holy Supper to commemorate a far greater deliverance. 'Our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ' (Ex. xii. 1–30; 1 Cor. v. 7).

In the elaborate ritual of the Tabernacle, sacrifice was prominent. It is unnecessary to prove that *all* the Levitical sacrifices were piacular, it is sufficient to show that *some* of them were so, and

were regarded as atonement for sin. On occasion of the worship of the golden calf, 'Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make *atonement* for your sin.' 'Moses said unto Aaron, Take thy censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, . . . and make atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord. . . . And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed' (Ex. xxxii. 30; Num. xvi. 46, 48). The Hebrew word rendered Atonement 'means to *cover* sin, in such a way that God regards it as neutralised, disarmed, inoperative to arouse His anger[1].' It is employed in numerous other passages in connexion with sacrifice. 'The priest shall offer for his sin a young bullock, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bullock and kill the bullock before the Lord. . . . And the priest shall make atonement for him' (Ex. xxix. 36; xxx. 10; Lev. i. 4; iv. 3–6; 22–26; 35; v. 10–18).

On the great Day of Atonement two goats were selected 'for a sin-offering'; one of which was killed, and its blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat to 'make atonement because of all their sins.' Then Aaron was commanded to 'lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat; and the

[1] *Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice.* Prof. Cave, D.D.

goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited' (Lev. xvi). Here the nature of sacrifice is fully expressed: first there is the death of the victim as the medium of forgiveness, and then the forgiveness itself, symbolized by sending away to the wilderness the living goat, on the head of which the sins of the people had been emblematically placed.

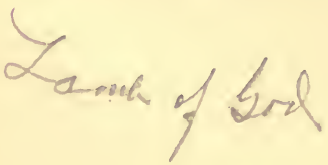
The Jews thus instructed, regarded sacrifice as a means whereby punishment could be averted. Thus, when the pestilence was raging, David the king went forth, 'and built an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel' (2 Sam. xxiv. 18–25).

We *prove* that the Levitical sacrifices were divinely appointed, and were piacular. We *infer* that the sacrifices which preceded them, having been approved by God, resembled them both in authority and in design. Thus successive generations offered animal sacrifices, in token of contrition and as a medium of pardon. Not merely 'a confession of dependence and trust'; but also a confession of sins, and of faith that in connexion with the substitution of an animal-victim those sins might be forgiven.

Those worshippers might not understand how pardon and sacrifice were connected, yet relying on the divinely appointed medium, they were delivered from the fear which guilt produces, and

brought into that condition of filial confidence and self-surrender, which requires such assurance of pardon as its antecedent and its cause. The Book of Leviticus obviously teaches what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews deduces from it, that 'without shedding of blood there is no remission.' The worshipper who confessed his sin over the head of the victim, the blood of which was then sprinkled on the altar, not merely professed his return to obedience, but also primarily sought deliverance from the burden of guilt, as essential to renewed obedience. How can I with confidence yield myself to God, unless I am assured that God is willing to accept me? The sacrifice was therefore needed, not merely as a profession of repentance, but as a medium and assurance of the divine mercy.

If sacrifices only signified living surrender, there was incongruity between the sign and the thing signified. Though the blood was the life, the shedding of that blood did not express living service. If blood represents life, blood shed is life ended. But if this indicated that the worshipper deserved to suffer for the sins confessed over the victim's head, then the death of the lamb, as the type, corresponded with the death of Christ, as the antitype—'the Lamb of God.'



CHAPTER IV.

WITNESS OF PROPHECY.

OUR Lord and His Apostles interpreted many prophecies as fulfilled in Himself. Philip said, 'We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write—Jesus of Nazareth' (John i. 45). Our Lord said to the Jews, 'Search the Scriptures... they bear witness of Me' (John v. 39). He might have summoned angels to His rescue, but 'How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?' (Matt. xxvi. 54). After His resurrection, 'Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.' Just before His ascension, 'These are My words which I spake unto you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures' (Luke xxiv. 25–27; 44–47).

St. Peter at Pentecost said, 'The things which

God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled.' Moses, 'and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, told of these days,' in which 'God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities' (Acts iii. 18–26). St. Paul wrote of 'the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ,' as having been 'witnessed by the law and the prophets' (Rom. iii. 21, 22). Before Agrippa he pleaded that he had taught nothing but what 'the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first, by the resurrection of the dead, should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.' At Rome he persuaded the Jews 'from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening' (Acts xxvi. 22, 23; xxviii. 23).

What did those prophets foretell concerning Christ?

When our first parents fell, the promise was given that the seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). Moses testified, 'The Lord said unto me, I will raise up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth' (Deut. xviii. 17, 18). Christ said, 'If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me, for he wrote of Me.' 'The words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them' (John v. 46; xii. 49; xiv. 10; xvii. 4, 8).

The Psalmists. 'Thou wilt not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption' is interpreted of Christ by St. Peter (Acts ii. 25–28). Ps. xxii predicts the piercing of the hands and dividing of the raiment, as fulfilled at the crucifixion (John xix. 24). Ps. xlv. 6 is interpreted of Christ, in Heb. i. 8. Ps. cx. 1 is quoted by St. Peter as fulfilled in 'this Jesus whom ye crucified' (Acts ii. 34–36). Ps. cx. 4 is applied to Christ, who 'hath His priesthood unchangeable' (Heb. v. 6–10; vii. 1–24).

ZECHARIAH'S prophecy, 'Behold thy King cometh riding upon an ass' (ix. 9) was claimed by St. Matthew as fulfilled at Christ's entry into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 1–5). Our Lord interpreted of Himself the prediction, Zech. xiii. 7, 'All ye shall be offended in Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered' (Matt. xxvi. 31). JOEL ii. 28–32 was quoted by St. Peter at Pentecost as fulfilled by the risen Christ—'I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,' &c. (Acts ii. 17–21). MALACHI was quoted by Christ as predicting His forerunner—'This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face' (Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 10).

ISAIAH has been well termed the Evangelical Prophet, so frequently does he prophesy of Christ, as interpreted by the Apostles. 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His

name Immanuel' (Is. vii. 14), is quoted by St. Matthew in his narrative of the Nativity (Matt. i. 23). Is. vi. 9, 10; viii. 14; xxviii. 16, are quoted by St. Paul as fulfilled in Christ—'As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling,' &c. (Rom. ix. 33); and by St. Peter 'a chief corner stone,' &c. (1 Pet. ii. 6). John the Baptist quoted Is. xl. 3, as referring to his own testimony of Christ (Matt. iii. 3). Is. xlii. 1–3 is referred by St. Matthew to Christ, 'A bruised reed shall He not break,' &c. Matt. xii. 17–21). Is. lxi. 1–3 was read at Nazareth by Jesus, who added, 'To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears' (Luke iv. 17–21).

ISAIAH liii. might seem to be a statement of accomplished fact, so circumstantially does it describe the sufferings of the Messiah. It also sets forth the purpose and results of those sufferings so explicitly that it may well be claimed as an emphatic witness to the Atonement.

Verse 1. St. John writes, 'These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him' (John xii. 38–41). So also St. Paul (Rom. x. 16). Verse 4 is quoted in Matt. viii. 17, 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.' Verse 5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions; and with His stripes we are healed,' is applied to Christ (1 Pet. ii. 24). Verse 6, 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all':

this must mean suffering the penalty. 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father' (Ezek. xviii. 20), i.e. shall not suffer for it. But Christ does this for us; 'His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree' (1 Pet. ii. 24). Verse 7, 'as a lamb that is led to the slaughter,' was applied to Christ by Philip, when by special commission from God he instructed the Ethiopian, and 'beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus' (Acts viii. 26–40). St. Peter, alluding to this prophecy, wrote, 'Christ suffered for you, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again' (1 Pet. ii. 23). Verse 12 is quoted by the Saviour Himself: 'This which is written must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned with transgressors; for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment' (Luke xxii. 37).

Prior to the death of Christ and during two centuries afterwards, the Jews interpreted this chapter as relating to a personal Messiah; but when Christianity triumphed and used this prediction in evidence, they changed their interpretation from a person to the nation. Those who accept Christ only as a moral reformer naturally reject an interpretation adverse to their theory. They may question the application of such prophecies, the infallibility of the Apostles, and even of their Master, or the accuracy of reporters and transcribers, but they cannot deny that the Apostles, as represented in the New Testament, taught that these predictions were fulfilled in Christ.

CHAPTER V.

WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JESUS said, 'The Law and the Prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached' (Luke xvi. 16). He was the last prophet of the old covenant, and the herald of the new; the divinely constituted link between the two dispensations, proclaiming the advent of Him who fulfilled the foregoing types and predictions. The long shadow projected by the sun from the approaching traveller gave place to the actual presence which verified the dim outline. John, a second Elijah, pointed from the shadow to the Substance, and in the name of all the prophets did homage to the Messiah by baptizing Him, a greater than all.

He was 'sent from God, that he might bear witness of the Light, that all might believe through Him.' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet' (John i. 7, 23). Thus

divinely commissioned, he bore testimony that Jesus was the Son of God who came to bring mercy and the knowledge of salvation. 'John beareth witness of Him, and crieth, Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.' He also testified that Jesus would bestow the Holy Spirit, who changes the sinful heart and produces holiness of life. 'He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God' (John i. 15–34).

Thus the Baptist bore testimony to the Saviour as the Author and Giver of spiritual grace to purify the heart and life. This is one aspect of salvation, its subjective influence. The other is the providing an Atonement to cover guilt and save from penalty. This was testified of Christ when the Baptist, looking towards Him, said—'Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The next day he re-affirmed the title which implied the purpose—'Behold the Lamb of God' (John i. 29, 36).

It is quite true that when, by the Holy Spirit given by Christ, a sinner renounces his sinful practices, sin is taken away; but is this the meaning here? It is the meaning of the promise that

Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit; and if it were also the meaning here we might expect to read—'Behold the great Teacher of holiness, its perfect Exemplar, the Giver of the Spirit, who thus, by influencing the heart of man, enables him to cease from sinning.' But what relation is there between a Lamb and such reformation of life, unless that which is suggested by the sacrificial Lamb of the Jewish worship? He did not say, 'Behold Him who illustrates in His character the gentleness and purity of a lamb'; not, 'Behold the Lamb who will teach men to become good'; but who taketh away sin; not the sins of individuals, but 'the sin of the world.'

The word 'means taketh away by *bearing or carrying* the thing that is taken away . . . implying that Christ took on Himself the burden of our sin, and *in this way* removed it from us. It is never used in Scripture to signify removing sin by instruction, authority, or example; but always to denote expiating sin or bearing its punishment. Had the Baptist's words been, "Behold the Light of the world," there might have been some greater plausibility in the suggestion that "the sin of the world" is here said to be removed through His instructions. But we cannot reasonably suppose that any other mode of removing sins is indicated, than that of making expiation or atonement for them[1].'

The Baptist instructed his hearers to recognise

[1] *Scriptural Doctrine of Atonement*, pp. 47, 48. Prof. Crawford.

the true Sacrifice of which the lambs offered on the altar were but figures. Here is the reality; provided not by men, but by God Himself; the fulfilment of type and prophecy; by whom the curse is removed not merely from the Jewish race, but from the whole world.

'The Baptist in a striking metaphor condenses the whole sacrificial system into a burning word based on Isaiah's oracle touching the suffering servant of Jehovah. . . . The Paschal Lamb was a *sin offering*, and freed Israel from the curse that fell on the first-born of Egypt. Twice every day a lamb was presented as a *burnt offering*, and accepted by God to make atonement for sin. . . . The lamb of the *trespass offering* was slain for atonement. . . . On the Day of Atonement the high priest took the blood of the bullock of *sin offering* into the holy place to make atonement, because of their "transgressions in all their sins." . . . God's Lamb is portrayed in terms which the writers of the New Testament regarded as a sufficient exposition of the meaning of the death of their Lord. . . . John the Baptist perceived with an intensity which plainly amounted to divine inspiration, that Jesus was not only the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, but the Lamb of God [1].'

This witness borne by the Baptist was certified by Jesus Himself—'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen

[1] *John the Baptist*, Lect. 6. H. R. Reynolds, D.D.

a greater than John the Baptist. . . . Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth' (Matt. xi. 11; John v. 33). Combine with this designation of the Lamb of God the words of the Prophet, 'He humbled Himself and opened not His mouth, as a lamb that is led to the slaughter' (Is. liii. 7); and those of the Apostle, 'Ye were redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, *even the blood* of Christ' (1 Pet. i. 19); and the vision of Jesus in the 'midst of the throne, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain'; with the celestial anthem, 'Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive glory and blessing. . . . Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb; who loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, be the glory for ever and ever. Amen' (Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 6, 12).

CHAPTER VI.

WITNESS OF THE WORDS OF JESUS.

It has been said that Christ Himself never taught Atonement for sin as the object of His mission; but that His simple moral teaching and martyr-death were misrepresented by Jewishly prejudiced followers, who attributed to Him their false interpretations. If Christ did indeed thus keep silent on this theme, it is replied that His great mission was to *make* the Gospel rather than to proclaim it. 'He came not to preach it so much, as that there might be a Gospel to preach. . . . The life of Christ was more than His words. His actions revealed the Father. He did not translate all He did into words. This the Apostles did. As "day unto day uttereth speech," though their voice is not heard, so even in the silence of Christ there is a revelation which transcends all that is contained in the rapture of Psalmists, the visions of Prophets and the wisdom of Apostles. . . . When God was living among men He was not always explaining

Himself. You cannot translate the Alps into a series of propositions; and there is no formula for the golden pomp of a sunset or for the majesty of the Matterhorn [1].'

But if His great object was to save by death, and if 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' it would have seemed strange if He had kept silence on a subject so important, and had never ratified the designation of the Baptist.

Ponder some of His words. 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life.' 'This is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life.' 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.' 'Whosoever believeth on Me shall never die.' 'No one cometh unto the Father but by Me' (John iii. 14, 15; vi. 40, 51; x. 28; xi. 26; xiv. 6).

Such exclusive claim implies exclusive qualification. He claimed to save; He qualified Himself by dying. 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven. The bread I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever. I am the Bread of Life. I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself. This He said signifying what death He should die.' 'The

[1] *The Atonement.* R. W. Dale, D.D.

Son of Man came to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.' 'The good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep. Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life.' 'The Son of Man came to save that which was lost.' 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (Matt. xi. 27, 28; xx. 28; Luke xix. 10; John ii. 19; vi. 32–40; 48–51; viii. 28; x. 14, 15, 17; xii. 23–28, 32; xv. 13; xvi. 23; xvii. 1–5.)

The Jews whom Christ addressed understood by ransom, not moral influence, but substitution in place of penalty; or a price to secure a benefit; the half-shekel for every one at a census, 'a ransom for his soul unto the Lord,' &c. (Ex. xxx. 12–16). No substitution for the life of a murderer was to be accepted. In this sense Christ gave His life 'a ransom for many.' Thus our Lord taught that the eternal life He had promised was linked with the surrender of His own life (Ex. xxx. 12–16; Lev. xxv. 25; Num. xviii. 15, 16; xxxv. 32).

No action in our Lord's ministry was more solemn than the institution of the Holy Supper, whereby He fulfilled the type of the Passover, which was now superseded by the commemoration of His death. 'He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, This is My body which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. And in like manner also the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood'; 'even that which is poured

out for you.' Had He come merely to exert moral influence, why not refer to His teaching, miracles, example, as specially to be kept in remembrance? Why select His death alone, unless it had a special significance? He explained what it meant. 'Drink ye all of it: for this is My blood of the covenant, which is *shed for many unto remission of sins*.' So that this Sacrament of Holy Communion was to be observed till His Second Advent, to keep His death and its purpose in constant remembrance (Matt. xxvi. 26–28; Mark xiv. 22–24; Luke xxii. 19, 20). St. Paul by divine authority confirmed the duty of preserving both the institution and its meaning—'My body which is for you: the new covenant in My blood: ye proclaim the Lord's death' (1 Cor. xi. 23–26).

Objectors often urge that the Apostles were trained up in Jewish ceremonial and in the use of sacrificial language, and so gave this colouring to Christ's simple teaching. Christ knew this, and deliberately used language which they would certainly interpret in this sense. In instituting an observance for the whole Church, in all coming time, to be significant of His death and its purpose, He could 'not have used any figure borrowed from the Jewish ritual, unless it were the very fittest that could be found to embody His real meaning. Our Lord must have used the words because He knew they would so understand them, and because He wished and intended them to do so. If He did not

mean to say that His death was an expiatory sacrifice, and that it was intended to procure remission of sins, He was using language which He must have known was sure to be misunderstood by those who heard Him, and through them to mislead every Christian Church which should afterwards receive the Gospel through their lips[1].'

After His resurrection the Lord continued to teach the necessity and purpose of His death. 'O slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?' To the disciples, just before His ascension, He said, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again the third day; and that *repentance and remission of sins* should be preached in His Name unto all the nations' (Luke xxiv. 25, 26; 46, 47).

How, in the light of such declarations by our Lord Himself, can it be maintained that the Atonement was a theory invented by His followers without any intimation from Himself? His chief mission was indeed to *make* the Atonement which, when completed, was to be proclaimed: but this was evidently in His heart all the while, and most emphatically declared, both during His living ministry and after His resurrection, in His parting words. It was because their minds and hearts were filled with this truth, which they had learned from

[1] *Holy Scripture respecting the Atonement.* Prof. Crawford, D.D., p. 51.

His constant teaching, that after His ascension and the gift of His Spirit they went forth at once to obey His command to preach this Gospel to every creature.

But even if our Lord had not thus emphatically witnessed to the Atonement in distinct words, His whole ministry breathed it. This pervaded His teaching, animated the letter, explained the symbol, interpreted the miracle, slept in His silence, lived in His death.

CHAPTER VII.

WITNESS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS.

THE Saviour's Passion is a prominent feature of all the Gospels. It is contrary to the general rule of proportion that a life crowded with important incidents should be narrated with such brevity, while the circumstances of death are described with such elaborate detail. If the mission of Christ was chiefly to influence morally by word and example, why has so much that He said and did, adapted to such purpose, been omitted? The 'death of the righteous' is in every case a mystery. Strange that God should allow any loyal servant, any loving child of His, although their righteousness is imperfect, to die as the wicked die. In the case of Christ, God allowed His well-beloved Son to die, the object of His perfect approval and delight, who had no sin of His own to demand penalty, and could not be guilty of that of others, but was a perfect reflection as man of the perfect holiness of God; and yet He died! He was not bound by the physical laws of

death, for He saved others from dying. The Atonement alone meets the difficulty. He died to 'take away the sin of the world.'

He was born not simply with the liability, but for the very purpose of death. Life is the great purpose of heroes and philanthropists. They *live* for the cause of humanity, and death cuts short their labours. Christ came to *die* for humanity, and His death perfected and perpetuated His work. This was prominently in His mind during His active ministry. Again and again He spoke to His disciples of the death He was to die. 'From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up' (Matt. xvi. 21; xxvi. 12; Mark viii. 31; ix. 12; xiv. 8; Luke ix. 22; xvii. 25; xxiv. 6–8). It was unlike other heroes thus to dwell on His death. Was it not because His death had objects beyond theirs? In their case life was to benefit, life which death ended: in His case life was not so much for philanthropy as for salvation by the surrender of it. 'We behold Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man' (Heb. ii. 9).

The Apostles were to be witnesses—*martures*—if need be, martyrs in our sense; but death in bearing witness was not to be sought as an object. They were to live as long as they might in order

to labour. Their Master instructed them, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee to another.' But He Himself sought death as His mission. 'He stedfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem.' 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!' When the hour of death drew near, a glorious vision cheered Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. What was the theme when Moses and Elijah conversed with Him? Not the joys of heaven, but the woes of earth; not the gorgeous triumph awaiting Him in the skies, but the agonizing path to the dark and dolorous tomb. They 'spake of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.' Why, at the hour of His greatest glory on earth, select as a theme the hour of His deepest humiliation? The special importance thus given to His decease was confirmed by the voice from heaven: 'This is My Son, My chosen, My beloved, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him' (Luke ix. 28–35; Matt. xvii. 5). Is there any adequate explanation of such emphatic references to His death, except that given by the Atonement?

Those sufferings cannot be accounted for by the natural result of the enmity of wicked men, provoked by His reproofs. He knew from the first what to expect. Objectors say, 'Christ simply came into collision with the world's evil, and bore the penalty of that daring; He approached the whirling wheel, and was torn to pieces.' But this has been

done by all martyrs. Why are they not called 'saviours'? They contended with the world's evil, as He did, and were vanquished. They were crushed by the rotating wheel, but had no power to check it, so as to save themselves and others. But He who calmed the raging sea and raised the dead could have overcome all forces of Nature or evil men, yet He allowed Himself to be crucified. 'No one taketh My life away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself' (Matt. xxvi. 53; John x. 18; xviii. 11; xix. 11).

His sufferings were not attributed by Himself or His Apostles to His enemies, except as instruments; but to the 'determinate counsel of God' (Acts ii. 23; iv. 24–28). When betrayed He said, 'The cup which *My Father hath given Me* shall I not drink it?' On the day of resurrection and on the eve of ascension He reminded the disciples that it had 'behoved Him to suffer,' as predicted (Luke xxiv. 7, 25–27, 44). His sufferings at the hands of men were not unavoidable. He might easily have escaped from Gethsemane. He said to Peter He could have summoned legions of angels to His rescue. To Pilate He said, 'Thou wouldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above' (John xix. 11).

His sufferings were not chiefly those of the body. Other martyrs to malice have died rapturously. Bodily torture has brightened the victor's torch. The agony of Gethsemane, the desponding cry of

Calvary, did not result from men. 'It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.' He made 'His soul an offering for sin' (Is. liii. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 24). It was not the being crushed by a wheel which was still to go on crushing those who oppose men's wickedness, but it was the arresting of the wheel of retributive justice which otherwise would destroy sinners. 'His death was His triumph over the world's evil. It was not the triumph of a whirling wheel! He was not conflicting with a physical or social law, and paying the penalty of His daring. He was magnifying the moral law and gaining the eternal rewards of obedience unto death. He was not helpless in the embraces of an infernal machine. His cross was the weapon of His warfare and the means of His victory.'

Some of His sufferings were incident to humanity. His physical nature endured bodily pain. His social nature suffered by ingratitude, hatred, and betrayal. His intellectual and moral nature suffered temptation, conflict, depression. His culture increased His sensitiveness. His purity was shocked by contact with wickedness. His sympathy shared the sorrows of others. His divine love grieved over the evils present and future which sin entailed. The illustration of the basest depravity in men's treatment of Himself intensified the sorrow of His death.

But this in a lower degree was 'common to men.' He suffered grief peculiar to Himself. There was an anticipation of death marked by a sadness not

often felt by His weakest followers. Death in itself could not have been shrunk from by Him who was 'the Resurrection and the Life.' Why should He say, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death;' enough to break His heart and end His life? Why should He entreat again and again, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me'? Why on the cross exclaim, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Matt. xxvi. 37–39; xxvii. 46).

He who said to His Father, 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do,' did not groan under conscious neglect of duty. If Christian faith, even when linked with the memory of aggravated guilt, has met death with composure, could the spotless One shrink from that which multitudes of martyrs have met with jubilant songs? He invoked Omnipotence. 'If it be possible!' If so many miracles for others, why not one for 'the Beloved Son'? Why was not this particular cup allowed to pass when no circumstances could hinder, no justice forbad, and the Sufferer might have been spared without injury to any, with benefit to all? Why, unless His death was to redeem?

Consider the facts. An innocent Man, greatest of philanthropists, the Son of God—yet chief of sufferers: not by irresistible forces, but by divine appointment: for sins not His own. It was more than sympathy; it was Substitution. As our Sin-

bearer, though He could not take the guilt, He bore the penalty. He carried our burden, not to share it with us, but to release us from it. 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us' (John xvii. 4; Gal. iii. 13).

He allowed Himself to feel the pressure of God's wrath against sin, that God's love might be revealed towards sinners. As God's displeasure must be felt towards those who break His laws, He, for a short season, and for them, experienced the hiding of His face and so endured the worst penalty of transgression. To the perfectly holy, to the well-beloved Son of God, this must have been an agony beyond what the best of imperfect beings can know. In proportion as God was consciously present habitually to the mind of Christ, the least withdrawal of that Presence was enough to break the heart. Was not this the immediate cause of death? With similar bodily wounds victims have lingered days on the cross. His speedy death surprised the authorities. What broke His mighty heart? He might have exulted that the greatest work ever achieved on earth was completed. He said to His disciples, 'If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I go to the Father.' Why did not He Himself rejoice? Because He was bearing our sins. This alone could explain the bloody sweat and agonising cry. If He died only as a martyr, could God desert suffering innocence? Or, if Jesus merely *imagined* Himself forsaken, shall we say

that the Author and Finisher of Faith, its chief Exemplar, lost His faith and fortitude in circumstances in which even imperfect men have sung their very pæans of victory, and that He wrongfully complained of the withdrawal of His Father's face when, if His sufferings were simply personal, that face must have been shedding its fullest light upon Him? What is the meaning of the cry? If the Saviour was not in error, there was a sense in which He was forsaken. What *is* the sense? If it is daring impiety to suspect that He was abandoned, if His death were private, and not vicarious, in what light must that abandonment be regarded? This question demands an answer that shall preserve untainted the innocence, faith, and courage of Christ, and preserve unimpeached the love and faithfulness of the Father. No such answer can be given save one, *He was wounded for our transgressions.* 'It was on the cross that Christ was working out the problem of reconciling the bestowment of mercy on sinners with the maintenance of justice; establishing an empire of grace on the foundation of law; blending into everlasting concord every element in the regal and paternal relationships of God, and by sufferings inconceivable, supplying securities for ever irrefragable, that the pardon of sinners should never bring into contempt the laws of heaven, but should impart to them a sanctity and impressiveness unfelt before[1].'

[1] *Atonement in relation to pardon.* Enoch Mellor, D.D., p. 39.

If the sufferings of Christ were endured only as an example of patience, multitudes of sufferers have furnished similar patterns; if not to the same degree, yet of greater bodily torture, and of much longer continuance. If to exhibit love, others have also shown love in suffering, but far more impressively and efficiently when endured for the purpose of relieving or rescuing others, and not as a mere exhibition, otherwise useless. If Christ's sufferings were for an example, they have an aspect terrible to all who desire to imitate Him, showing that a faultless life may have the most disastrous close, that endeavours to please God may be attended by the sternest signs of disapproval, and that God seemed rather to frown than smile on His tenderness towards us and His endeavours to show how much God loves us.

'*Surely He hath borne our griefs.* If this is not the explanation of His desertion on the cross, then the cross, instead of declaring that God has not forsaken the human race, notwithstanding all its crimes, seems to be an appalling testimony to all nations and to all centuries, that He may forsake, in the hour of their sorest need, those who have perfectly loved and obeyed Him. Either the death of Christ was the Atonement for human sin, or else it fills me with terror and despair[1].'

[1] *The Atonement.* R. W. Dale, D.D., p. 63.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITNESS OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

ST. PETER was eminent among the disciples. With James and John, the specially favoured three, he enjoyed peculiar advantages in intimate knowledge of the Saviour, and had full opportunity of knowing what He taught. His name was Christ's recognition of capacity. To him were specially entrusted 'the keys of the kingdom,' as the first to preach both to Jews and Gentiles. He was, therefore, a competent witness to the teaching of his divine Master.

On the very first opportunity, on the Day of Pentecost, when 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' he spoke of Christ 'crucified and slain,' but 'by God raised up,' as having 'shed forth this' miraculous gift. He said, 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission* of your sins' (Acts ii. 38). 'The things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus

fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, that your sins may be blotted out' (Acts iii. 18, 19). Thus he obeyed his Lord's last instruction, 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name, beginning at Jerusalem' (Luke xxiv. 47). So also to the rulers, 'In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved' (Acts iv. 12). So also to Gentiles in the person of the Roman soldier, 'To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His Name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins' (Acts x. 43).

If thus he preached to sinners, so also he instructed saints. 'Elect in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*. Concerning which salvation the Spirit of Christ which was in them (the prophets) testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow.' He reminded believers that they were 'redeemed from their vain manner of life, not with silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.' Redeemed, not by teaching and example merely or chiefly, improving their own nature; not by life lived for them merely, but by life surrendered for them, emphatically by this, 'even the blood of Christ.' 'Delivered from their old heathen life because Christ atoned for their old heathen sins' . . . by

'the sacrifice which created new relations between men and God' (1 Pet. i. 1, 2, 10, 11, 18, 19).

In exhorting cruelly treated slaves to patient endurance, he said, 'Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps.' The suffering as an Atonement gave occasion to its lesson of patience. So the crew of a lifeboat do not go out to a wreck to display courage, but to save the perishing, though in doing this they set an example. Peter adds this explanation—'Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree; by whose stripes ye were healed.' He, the innocent, bare '*our* sins,' i.e. their penalty (see Ez. xviii. 20); not only by mental sympathy, but 'in *His body*,' by His death; as one condemned 'on the tree'; so that we, for whose guilt He suffered, having died in Him our Surety, might be delivered from death and sin its cause, and 'live unto righteousness' (1 Pet. ii. 21–25).

'Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.' Not *with* us, as merely sharing our suffering, but *for* us, that we might escape it: the blameless One on whom retributive justice had no claim, that we, deserving punishment, might be saved through His suffering on our behalf. Thus redeemed, we join with St. Peter—'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pet. i. 3–11).

CHAPTER IX.

WITNESS OF THE APOSTLE JOHN.

IF 'he that loveth not knoweth not,' conversely he that loveth much knoweth much. John, who was specially designated as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' must have known, not only by long and close companionship, but by heart-sympathy, what was the main purpose of his divine Teacher.

In his Gospel narrative, containing Christ's own testimony, the Evangelist's belief in the Atonement is expressed in the explanation he gives of the Lord's reference to His being lifted up for salvation as Moses lifted up the serpent for the cure of the wounded who looked to it in faith. 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent the Son into the world, that the world should be saved through Him' (John iii. 16, 17). If, as some consider, these words are not Christ's, they are the explanation of His words by the beloved disciple,

who must have learned from his divine Lord that it was the love of God for our sinful world which prompted this gift of His beloved Son, who was lifted up on the cross to effect eternal salvation for all who trust in Him.

In addition to St. John's Gospel we possess a letter written in his old age, in which he says, 'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Is this cleansing moral reformation only, or is it deliverance from guilt? If the former, walking in the light accomplishes it. If the teaching, example and love of Christ effect salvation simply by influencing our moral nature, these constitute the light which drives away the darkness. If so, why does not the Apostle say, 'and the light in which Christ dwells and sheds forth in His teaching, this cleanseth us from all remaining imperfection'? Why say, 'the *blood* cleanseth'? Is not the blood that cleanseth in ver. 7 related to the forgiveness in ver. 9? (1 John i. 7–9).

The same theme of forgiveness is continued in the following chapter. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Surely the meaning suggested is that we are forgiven through the mediation of Christ. He who taught 'God is Love' represents men as needing an Advocate, who in this passage does not plead *with us*, to persuade us to become good, but

with God, against whom we have sinned, to bestow the forgiveness just before promised (1 John ii. 1).

Of this Advocate St. John adds, 'And He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.' It is as Propitiation that He is Advocate with the Father, who is 'faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Pardon results from the advocacy, and this forms the Propitiation. 'To propitiate always refers to that which changes the disposition of the person offended; and when used in relation to offences against the divine law, always describes the means by which the sin is supposed to be covered, in order that the divine forgiveness might be secured[1].' The result is not only pardon, but purity. 'He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 'I write unto you, my little children, because your sins are forgiven you *for His name's sake.*' Forgiveness, not because the sin has been renounced and a new life in the light of God commenced, but for the name of Him who is the Propitiation for our sins, and our Advocate with the Father (1 John ii. 2, 12).

The same subject is continued in the third chapter—'Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' Life is to be risked or surrendered for the brethren in protecting them from

[1] *The Atonement*, by Dr. Dale. Lect. V, p. 162.

harm, because Christ so laid down His life for us: an objective benefit, and not merely a subjective influence (1 John iii. 16).

The Apostle cannot let the subject drop. In the next chapter we read, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.' A propitiation was needed: and this was provided by God Himself, and such love should prompt us in our conduct to others (1 John iv. 9–11).

Again in the fifth chapter he concludes his letter with the same testimony. 'The witness that God hath borne concerning His Son is this—that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life. These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God' (1 John v. 10–13.)

Do not these words of the beloved disciple teach that Christ's death meant more than moral influence, and not merely his *opinion*, but the deep feeling of his heart, the ground of his confidence, the constraining motive of his obedience and incentive to his zeal? Such convictions harmonize with the songs of heaven which he was privileged to hear when he saw the Saviour in glory before the throne: 'a Lamb as though it had been slain:' who said to him, 'Fear not, I am He that liveth

and was dead;' in whose presence the glorious company of heaven 'sing a new song, saying, Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe. Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power and riches, and glory and blessing. Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. These are they which washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple' (Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 6–13; vii. 13–15).

This presence of the Son of God in glory as the ever-living Advocate and Saviour illustrates the striking statement that He Himself, and not merely His death, is the abiding Atonement. 'We *have* an Advocate with the Father.... *He* is the Propitiation for our sins. ... Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son, the Propitiation for our sins' (1 John ii. 1, 2; iv. 10). In emphasizing the reiterated testimony of the Apostles respecting His death we must not separate this, as the act of sacrifice, from Himself as the Propitiation. It was not merely the human nature which suffered, but the undivided Person of the God-Man who still exists. The Propitiation is not the death, but He who died, and now lives and reigns. It is not an event which happened at Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago, but it is

the eternal Son of God who became incarnate that He might suffer for sin and become an undying, unchanging Advocate, our Representative in heaven, ever presenting Himself as the Atonement for sin. As He was eternal when He suffered, He, ever living, is an eternal Propitiation. It is offered for us daily. 'Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea rather that was raised from the dead, who also maketh intercession for us.' 'If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life' (Rom. v. 10; viii. 34).

It is Christ Himself who propitiates. Not He apart from His sufferings, nor the sufferings apart from His Person: not the sufferings past and gone, but the Sufferer now glorified, who 'ever liveth to make intercession, having obtained eternal redemption' (Heb. ix. 12). 'I am He that liveth, and was dead, yea, and am alive for evermore.' The temporary death efficaciously abides in the everlasting Saviour, who is still present to us, and even more accessible to those who believe than He was to those who saw Him as Man on the earth[1]. In heaven He still atones. As our High Priest He daily offers Himself to God for us. It is an Atonement ever going on. He is enthroned, and is 'worthy to take the book' of

[1] *Doctrine of the Atonement.* President Edwards, D.D., pp. 130–136.

universal government, destiny, salvation. Throughout eternity His glorified Presence will be to the innumerable multitude around the throne the symbol, guarantee, certainty of their everlasting safety, and the theme of their everlasting song. Difficulties felt by some in receiving the doctrine of Atonement would be lessened by contemplating, not so much the death at Jerusalem as the Propitiation, but the Saviour, who having died, ever lives to save to the uttermost.

CHAPTER X.

WITNESS OF THE APOSTLE JAMES.

His silence respecting Atonement might commend the omission of his Epistle from our argument. But this might seem evasion of a difficulty. But the omission by one witness or historian of a fact clearly attested by others, is no disproof. So a theological writer or preacher who omits from some treatise or sermon an important doctrine is not chargeable with non-belief of it. His special purpose may not need such reference.

So with St. James. His subject was not doctrine, but duty; not the Atonement itself, but its results. He warns against false reliance on faith as a substitute for the practical righteousness which is the outcome of it. It was surely not undervaluing salvation by faith when he insisted that it is always fruitful. This evidences its truth.

An argument for Atonement has been drawn from this very silence. The warning against a rising heresy was proof of the prevalence of the

doctrine it perverted. Because the Apostolic Church taught justification by faith, some false professors, to cover their inconsistent conduct, taught the perilous notion that faith supersedes righteousness, and is a valid excuse for sin. So St. James blew the trumpet-warning—'What doth it profit, if a man *say* he hath faith, but have not works? Can *that* faith save him? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead' (James ii. 14, 26).

Dr. Dale, in an exhaustive argument, shows that the false views against which this Apostle contended could not have prevailed if it had been the doctrine of the Church that salvation consisted in works resulting from moral influence. The *absence* of works would have been self-condemnation for those who proclaimed salvation *by* works; but was not inconsistent with the *profession* of salvation by faith. Therefore this reproof indicated the prevalence of teaching which exalted faith as the means of salvation, and which was perverted to mean that the profession of faith would save in the absence of works. The inference is that Christ was habitually preached as providing forgiveness, and faith as securing individual salvation. 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, not by works': this was the Gospel; 'By faith ye are saved without any works as its result and evidence'; this was the heresy: but the heresy bore witness to the gospel as the actual teaching of the Apostles. 'Had the early Church

been taught that the Christian salvation is only a salvation from sin, it is inconceivable that any persons bearing the Christian name would have supposed that they might be saved by faith without works. Salvation must have been represented as something else than a change in their personal life and character, effected by the revelation of God in Christ[1].'

The doctrine of James, instead of contradicting, sustains that of Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians (ii. 8, 9), 'By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory.' This verse must not be separated from the sentence immediately following, in which St. Paul affirms that works inevitably follow faith; inasmuch as the grace which saves, so changes the heart that good works are produced; but these, being results of God's own workmanship, can never be a cause of boasting, or weaken the truth that we are saved by grace through faith. 'For we are *His* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them' (Eph. ii. 10). Thus James confirms Paul in the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ's Atonement, and with him insists that this is verified by the righteousness which it is intended and calculated to produce, and without which it is worthless and false.

[1] *The Atonement*, by Dr. Dale. Lect. V.

CHAPTER XI.

WITNESS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

It cannot be said that Saul of Tarsus was prejudiced by personal friendship. At the time of Christ's death he was a bigoted devotee of Pharisaic Judaism; proud of his own legal righteousness, and clinging to the current expectation of a worldly kingdom. Yet, from a bitter enemy of the new sect he became its most able and zealous champion. Whence obtained he such assurance of these hated doctrines that he 'suffered the loss of all things' in publishing them?

Luke, the physician, his intimate friend and companion, relates how, on his cruel mission to Damascus, he was converted by a vision of the Lord Jesus (Acts ix. 1–22). St. Paul himself related this to the angry crowd at Jerusalem, and to King Agrippa at Cæsarea, adding the special commission given him by Christ—'To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness, to turn them from the power of Satan unto God,

that they may receive *remission of sins*, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me.' From the first he was commanded to make known *forgiveness* in the name of the crucified Christ (Acts xxvi. 16–18).

At once admitted into the society of believers at Damascus, he heard their personal testimony, and could learn all their doctrines and practices. A keen lawyer and judge of character, he must have been fully convinced of their sincerity, and accurately knew what they taught. At once he bore testimony with them. 'Straitway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God.' Luke goes on to relate how at Antioch Paul said—'Through this man is proclaimed *remission of sins*; and by Him every one that believeth is *justified from all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses' (Acts xiii. 26–39). Salvation, not the subsequent reward of amended life, but the immediate effect of accepting Christ, whom God had raised from the dead. To the anxious inquiry of the jailer he said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Pardon was offered, accepted, rejoiced in, at once, not a reward of amendment, but by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xvi. 30–34).

His farewell address to the elders of Ephesus shows what his doctrine had been there during three years. 'Ye know how I testified repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus

Christ . . . Take heed . . . to feed the church of God, which He purchased *with His own blood.*' He was on his way to Jerusalem, expecting bonds and afflictions, but he did 'not count life dear to himself,' if only he 'might accomplish the ministry he had received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God' (Acts xx. 21–28).

In his Epistles, St. Paul reiterates with emphasis the great theme of his preaching.

To the *Corinthians*—'Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not in wisdom of words, lest *the cross of Christ* should be made void. We preach *Christ crucified*, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. I determined not to know anything among you, save *Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*' He sternly reproved those who said, 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?' If Christ's death was *for* them by promoting moral culture, then Paul's sufferings, by which he 'died daily,' were *for* them in the same sense. But this idea he indignantly repudiated. Christ alone died for them. It was unlike all other deaths, because it was an atoning sacrifice (1 Cor. i. 12, 13, 17, 23, 24; ii. 2).

He prefaced his great argument for the Resurrection, by again explicitly asserting the truth he was commissioned to preach. 'For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ *died for our sins* according to the Scriptures': not only and not chiefly to persuade men to cease

from sin, but as bearing its penalty and securing pardon as a necessary condition. An innocent man unjustly accused may be said to die *for* the real culprit who escapes; so Christ died 'for us,' having voluntarily interposed that we might be saved. The good news which Paul had received from Christ Himself, which the Corinthians had believed, by which they hoped for salvation, 'in which they stood,' without which their 'faith was vain,' having no basis, was this,—'that Christ died for our sins' (1 Cor. xv. 1–3). The Resurrection was evidence of the acceptance of the Sacrifice. 'If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins' (1 Cor. xv. 17). But why should faith be rendered useless by the non-resurrection of Christ, if He saves only by moral influence? This would not need resurrection, any more than the moral influence of any other teacher or martyr needs it. But since Christ died as an Atonement, His resurrection was evidence of its completion and acceptance.

This, as already shown, was the great truth set forth in the Holy Supper, the obligation to observe which Paul had specially 'received of the Lord,' who said, '*This cup is the new covenant in My blood.* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death' (1 Cor. xi. 23, 26). 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of *the blood of Christ*? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of

the body of Christ?' (1 Cor. x. 16). Again we ask, if salvation is chiefly by the influence of Christ's example, why not show forth His *life* rather than His death?

He thus expressed the great theme of his ministry —'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and committed unto us the word of reconciliation' (2 Cor. v. 18–21). The great work of the Christian ministry is to reconcile sinners to God, who reconciles the world by '*not reckoning unto them their trespasses*.' This sets them free from condemnation, opens the way to God, inspires hope, and prompts them to be reconciled to Him who is so ready to be reconciled to them. The Atonement removes man's unrighteous alienation by first removing God's righteous displeasure.

He emphasizes Atonement in these almost startling terms—'Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' He, the sinless, took the place of us sinners, that we, the sinful, might be accepted by God on the ground of His righteousness, and by faith and love through the operation of His Spirit, become ourselves righteous —'the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. v. 21).

As to the motive of Christian zeal he says, 'The love of Christ constraineth us: He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and

rose again' (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). The love of Christ had been shown in human sympathy, compassion, miracles; but His love in *dying* to save us from death is the impelling motive. His death was unlike all other. It was representative of mankind. He died for all; and they who accept the mediation died in Him, and so paid the penalty of law. They now share in the resurrection, and their new life belongs to Him. His love inspires grateful obedience, sweetly compels glad service, constrains to a new life, not of self-pleasing, but of pleasing Him who 'died for us and rose again.'

To the *Romans*.—'Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ died for the ungodly. God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. While we were enemies we were reconciled to God, through the death of His Son. We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. There is therefore now no

condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.' Here we are taught that God forgives; and in the next clause that it is through the Atonement. 'Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died.' The death of the Righteous One is the ground of the pardon of the unrighteous (Rom. i. 16; iii. 20–26; v. 1–11; vi. 23; viii. 1, 32–34).

To the *Galatians*.—'Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins. The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself up for me. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. God sent forth His Son, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons . . . Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal. i. 3, 4; ii. 20; iii. 13, 14; iv. 4, 5; vi. 14).

To the *Ephesians*.—'Christ, in whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. God, being rich in mercy, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ . . . made nigh in the blood of Christ. . . . For He is our peace, who came to reconcile both unto God through the cross; through Him we have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.' Believers are to 'forgive each other, even as God

also in Christ forgave them.' It is more than moral influence when we forgive the faults of others. So Christ died that we might be forgiven by God. 'Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God' (Eph. i. 7; ii. 4–22; iv. 32; v. 2).

To the *Philippians*.—'Being in the form of God, He became obedient even unto the death of the cross; wherefore God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name. For whom I suffered the loss of all things, that I may gain Christ; not having a righteousness of mine own, but that which is through faith in Christ' (Phil. ii. 6–11; iii. 7–11). If Christ's righteousness was not one of Atonement, why should Paul give up his own, which, however defective, was better than nothing, and better to him than that of any one else, which could not become his own unless reckoned to his account, as that of Christ in the Atonement?

To the *Colossians*.—'In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins . . . He made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . . And you, in time past enemies, hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy. You, being dead through your trespasses, did He quicken together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, nailing

it to the cross. . . . Even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye' (Col. i. 12–22; ii. 13, 14; iii. 13).

To the *Thessalonians*.—'Jesus delivereth us from the wrath to come'; not only from sinful conduct by moral influence, but from wrath because of sins already committed. 'For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that we should live together with Him' (1 Thess. i. 10; v. 9).

To *Timothy*.—'Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. There is one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.' On the eve of martyrdom he thus expressed his hope: 'Christ Jesus abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher. For the which cause I suffer these things; yet I am not ashamed; for I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him' (1 Tim. i. 15; ii. 5, 6; 2 Tim. i. 9–12).

To *Titus*.—'Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.' 'The kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness

which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour' (Tit. ii. 11–14; iii. 4–6).

It is difficult to understand how any candid reader of St. Paul can interpret such statements as simply meaning moral influence. Objectors may question his inspiration, or even the correctness of his human judgment, but they surely ought to acknowledge that he taught forgiveness as secured by the death of Christ.

We repeat that the idea of the Christian Atonement was not originated by St. Paul. It had been taught by Christ Himself and proclaimed by the Apostles when Saul of Tarsus was persecuting all who held it. It was at variance with his early training and prejudices. To adopt it was to sacrifice all his worldly interests. He could not have invented it; he would not if he could. As soon as he was converted he was instructed in the doctrine by men who had been taught it by the Apostles. In addition to this, he received it authoritatively from the Lord Himself. Paul's doctrine was Christ's doctrine.

No wonder that having been so taught—having experienced the saving power of faith in his own soul, and witnessed it in the case of multitudes, attested as it was by divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost—no wonder that he made the cross

prominent in his preaching and letters, as the only foundation of a sinner's hope, the only fountain of a believer's joy, the great incentive of all holy obedience and consecrated service: no wonder that to all, though to many it was a stumbling-block, he preached 'Christ crucified.'

'The cross of Christ was the centre of all St. Paul's preaching. The most illustrious of missionaries declared to the heathen that God was at peace with them because Christ had died. He maintained that there is no hope except in Him whose death is at once the revelation of the righteousness of God and the propitiation for the sins of men. The death of Christ, as the objective ground of the divine forgiveness of human sin, was the substance of St. Paul's preaching; it was the central idea of his theology; it was the spring of the mightiest motives by which he was animated in his apostolic work[1].'

[1] *The Atonement.* R. W. Dale, D.D., Lect. VI.

CHAPTER XII.

WITNESS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS Epistle, accepted as having Apostolic authority, shows that its writer considered the ceremonies and priesthood of the old dispensation as fulfilled in Christ.

'God hath spoken to us in His Son, who, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. . . . We behold Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man—that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. . . . A merciful and faithful High-priest, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. . . . A great High-priest, who hath passed through the heavens, is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him . . . Because He abideth for ever, He is able to save

to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them . . . Who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices; for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. Not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . The beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high-priest as an offering *for sin*, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate.' The teaching is that Christ offered, as those priests, a *sacrifice for sin*, which was Himself.

'Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission . . . but now, once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself . . . once offered to bear the sins of many. We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Having therefore boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. . . . Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shep-

herd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen' (Heb. i. 3; ii. 9–17; iv. 14; v. 9; vii. 24, 27; ix. 12–28; x. 10–22; xii. 2; xiii. 11, 12, 20).

If the temporary arrangements of the former dispensation are used as symbols of the abiding facts of the latter, such illustration does not turn these facts into figures. The Jewish priests 'served that which is a *copy and shadow* of the heavenly things.' Christian facts and doctrines are the heavenly, the abiding things, of which those transient ordinances were anticipatory copies (Heb. viii. 5; x. 1).

This interpretation of those earlier things was not invented by human fancy, but was the teaching of divine revelation. The entrance of the high-priest into the Holy of Holies was interpreted as typical of Christ's ascension—'*The Holy Ghost this signifying*, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing; which is a parable for the time now present. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us' (Heb. ix. 8, 9, 24). The law was 'a *shadow* of the things to come; but

the body is Christ's' (Col. ii. 17). Thus the precedent indistinct types of the Old Testament foreshadowed the substance of the New. If the Christian doctrine of Atonement, resting on its own independent foundation, is so capable of illustration from an ancient ceremonial ordained by God and elaborately described in His Word, may it not be inferred that the correspondence was designed by the Author of both systems?

Rejectors of our doctrine say that New Testament Atonement was evolved out of Old Testament ceremonial by the Apostles, who, as Jews, had been brought up in the practice and love of it. We say, that the Atonement having been divinely revealed, the Apostles found in that ceremonial much to illustrate it. There were differences between the two which rendered it unlikely that the one could of itself suggest the other. Would sacrifices offered by men to God develop a sacrifice by God for men—the small gifts of irrational animals the infinite offering of the Son of God—the sacrifices which removed ceremonial defect, that which cleansed the conscience and saved the soul? Would those who abhorred the idea of human sacrifice have invented the death of the Son of Man as pleasing to God? But those who accepted the Atonement as a divine fact, readily found in the old ceremonial illustrations of a sacrifice transcending in nature, importance, and results. This was their justification in relinquishing

the Old for the New and better covenant. Whatever objectors may say as to the fulfilment of Jewish ritual in Christian doctrine, they cannot deny that the writer of this Epistle, and those who accepted it, did believe in Atonement by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES AS A WHOLE.

DURING several years the Apostles were constant companions of the Lord. They listened to His teaching in public, and enjoyed opportunities in private of more fully understanding it. They thus were specially qualified to discharge the great commission given them to preach His Gospel to the world. Unless this greatest of all teachers had been incompetent they could not have permanently misunderstood the great object of His mission. Merely as honest reporters their doctrine of Christ's death and its purpose should be accepted as His own. The Gospel of the Apostles must have been the Gospel of Christ. Otherwise 'how was it possible for men of ordinary capacity so grievously to pervert and corrupt His teaching? . . . Objections against their teaching on a point like this are an impeachment of the authority of Christ. . . . If their varying statements are harmonious expressions of the same idea—that the

death of Christ is the immediate ground on which God grants to the penitent remission of sins—the Apostles must have received the idea from Christ Himself.' (Dale.)

The value of the evidence of the 'glorious company of the Apostles' does not depend entirely on express statements, but also on the spirit which pervades the whole of their combined teaching. They referred all duty, encouragement, consolation to the Christ whose atoning death they testified. It was the cross which gave force to every appeal, motive for every duty, reality to every promise, courage for every trial, certainty to every hope, life to every function of the spiritual nature. Prayer was to be offered 'in the Name' of Christ: praise was 'giving thanks always in the Name of our Lord Jesus': service resulted from being 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works': benevolence was encouraged by its being exercised for the sake of Christ; 'husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it': wives are to submit to their husbands, 'as unto the Lord': children are to obey their parents 'in the Lord': believers are to 'do all in the name of the Lord Jesus': if they are 'blessed with all spiritual blessings,' it is 'in Christ Jesus': their happiness results from Him, 'in whom believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable': their very life is Himself; 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

Of whom beside were such expressions ever used? If Christ were merely Teacher, Example, Martyr, and thus exerted a moral influence of the same nature as that of many others, could such claims have been thus exclusively urged? There must have been an essential difference. This is clearly declared to have been that He died for our redemption.

It has been said that the doctrine of Atonement was developed from slight allusions in the Gospels into a great system in the Epistles as an after-growth. But we have seen that it was taught by Christ. If more fully by His disciples, the growth was not greater than in His own personal teaching. The advance, in development of doctrine, from the Sermon on the Mount to the valedictory discourse; from Matt. v.–vii. to John xiv.–xvii., was greater than any evolution from the Gospels to the Epistles. So also had been the growth of spiritual teaching in the Old Testament, from that of Moses to that of the Psalmists, Isaiah, and the other prophets. Compare Leviticus with Psalm li.: Is. i. 10–18: xii.: xxxiii. 20–24: xxxv.: xl. 1–11, 28–31: xli. 10–20: xliii. 1–4: xliv. 21–23: xlix. 13–17: li. 1–12: liii.: lv.: lvii. 15: lviii.: lx.: lxiii. 16: lxiv. 1–9, &c.

Such development was ordained by the Great Teacher. 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide

you into all the truth, and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you. These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. He shall bear witness of Me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning' (John xiv. 26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 8–14).

It is here expressly declared by our Lord, that after His departure the Holy Spirit would reveal more fully the truth to the disciples, whose testimony would be not their own invention, but what they, divinely aided, remembered of His own words, and what they were specially taught by His Spirit. The Spirit of Christ in them bore true witness of Christ. 'Salvation from sin, procured by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, is unquestionably a central and fundamental doctrine of Christianity, as taught by Christ and His Apostles, by the truth or falsehood of which Christianity must stand or fall[1].'

Surely with such witnesses 'evincing such harmony in the divine dispensations, such unity of principle and design between the earlier and the later portions of divine revelation,—it would be far more consistent to renounce the authority of the

[1] *The Atonement.* By Archbishop Magee.

Bible at once, than to admit that authority, and deny that it teaches the doctrine of redemption by substitutionary sufferings or sacrificial Atonement. . . . To the mind that can contrive, to its own satisfaction, to strip the Bible of the doctrine of Atonement by vicarious suffering, it might, in my apprehension, be safely pronounced impossible to convey a Divine discovery at all ; there being no terms conceivable which might not, by such a mind, be explained away. SALVATION IS THE LESSON of the Bible :—and it is salvation by ATONEMENT, OR SUBSTITUTIONARY SUFFERING[1].'

'If expressions such as these do not teach us that the death of Christ and pardon are so connected with each other that the latter is absolutely dependent on the former, then there is no meaning in language, then inspiration itself bewilders when it should guide, obscures when it should illumine, and infinite wisdom might well confess itself baffled in the endeavour to find or fabricate words and phrases to convey the truth that man is saved through the atonement of Christ. If this verity is not as visible throughout the whole Apostolic writings, as if it had been traced in sunbeams, then it is but little to say that the Apostles were arrant blunderers when they used the pen. . . . The Holy Spirit that directed them is compromised in what thus becomes a systematic perversion of speech, and the Bible, though from heaven, wins

[1] *The Atonement of Christ*, by Rev. R. Wardlaw, D.D.

for itself the inglorious fame of being the worst written book in the world[1].'

Surely there is more than enough in these testimonies of the Apostles to justify the explicit language of the Communion Service of the Church of England, which speaks of Christ suffering 'death upon the cross for our redemption'; and making there, 'by His one oblation of Himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.'

[1] *The Atonement: its Relation to Pardon*, by Rev. E. Mellor, D.D.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT.

In support of the Fact of Atonement we rely on no *a priori* reasonings. We do not dogmatise on eternal necessity, nor suggest that an infinite God could not forgive sin without an infinite Atonement. But we do infer from the law of Divine economy, the Son of God would not have become incarnate and have died to save sinners if the same results could have been secured by a method less costly. Whatever strength may accrue from other arguments, our first and authoritative appeal is to God's own Word. Interpreting this according to the general laws of language, and relying not on isolated texts, but on the whole tenour of the teaching, we prove that forgiveness, through the Sacrifice of Christ, as the necessary prelude to righteousness, is revealed as Atonement.

The theory chiefly urged against this view is that salvation results from the moral influence of Christ's life and death in producing reformation of character.

We appeal with confidence to the Scriptures cited in proof that such reformation of character results from the forgiveness of sin through the death of Christ. We refer once more to such statements as the following. 'His own self bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.' 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.' 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?' ... 'Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for it ... that it should be holy and without blemish.' In these and a multitude of other texts it is clearly stated that Christ's Atonement was to obtain forgiveness and reconciliation with God as preceding and producing conformity to His law.

Explanations may vary, but the fact remains. Sinners are saved by reliance on Christ who died, and not by accepting any particular theory. 'The Creeds of the Church Catholic tell us to believe in the Forgiveness of Sins. They link that belief to the great miracle of the Incarnation; they tell us that our salvation has been procured by Christ, the Son of God, who, in order to effect it, came down from heaven, was incarnate, suffered, died, and rose

again. But how His life and death and resurrection accomplished our salvation they tell us not. They teach *an* Atonement; but theory of Atonement, they give us none. All that we are bound to believe and defend is, that there has been an Atonement effected for us by the death of Christ, that this has removed a hindrance in the way of remission of sins other and beyond any that might exist in ourselves; but what that hindrance is, and how that death availed to remove it, we are nowhere expressly told.' (Magee.)

Mystery should be no hindrance to faith. Sin itself is a mystery. The natural universe obeys its Creator; while man, the chief work, sets up his own will as if he could be independent of the Divine Will. If, without understanding the 'origin of evil' we suffer from the fact of it, so, without understanding the mystery of Atonement, we may rejoice that the Second Adam died to 'take away the sin of the world.' As we cannot ignore the disease, we ought not to reject the remedy because also mysterious. If one is abnormal, we might expect the other to be so too.

As we may profit by the solar ray without knowing the nature of light; and be nourished by food while ignorant of the process of digestion, so multitudes are saved through the Atonement, who cannot explain it. 'Great is the mystery of godliness'; yet it is reasonable that with the angels we 'desire to look into these things.' Can we cross such

a gulf and not desire to examine the structure of the bridge? When in natural processes we trace adaptation of means to ends our adoration of the Creator is enhanced. Salvation by Christ exceeds all other facts in importance to us. It cannot result from a mere arbitrary decree. May we not try to discover some of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge contained in it?

After the inspired statements quoted in preceding chapters, it seems superfluous to attempt any other explanation. They show that the Death of Christ is substituted for our bearing the penalty of sin ourselves, answering all the purposes for which punishment might have been inflicted, and with additional advantages which punishment could not have secured. Punishment would have honoured Law, but destroyed the sinner: Atonement does more honour to law, but saves the sinner.

Punishment is a fact in the universal government of God. Natural law demands inexorable physical penalty. Social loss follows social faults. Conscience is a tormenting reprover when no one knows our wrong-doing. Threatening and punishment from Genesis to Revelation show God's resolve to uphold government by vindicating law. Suffering in itself is an evil. If ordained as punishment, it must be because of some resulting advantage. Remission without such result would therefore be injurious. The reasons that justify infliction seem to forbid remission. But if the Sacrifice of Christ

accomplishes all for which punishment was designed, such substitution may be accepted as Atonement, consistently both with justice and mercy. I repeat, in the spoken words of an eminent poet-preacher, 'Christ's Sacrifice is substituted for the sinner's punishment, answering all its purposes, and better.' (T. T. Lynch.)

Punishment is not necessarily for reformation. Its purpose may be answered by satisfying a sense of equity, by expressing abhorrence of and deterring others from wrong-doing. But the Sacrifice of Christ, while accomplishing this, saves the transgressor also not only from the penalty of sin but from its ruling power, producing in him repentance and reformation. While evil consequences of sin are removed from the sinner, beneficial results of punishment are secured to the universe. God is glorified, law honoured, government upheld, at the same time that guilt is cancelled and the sinner saved. Thus did Jesus 'put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself'—as a punishment by securing its ends; and as a power by giving spiritual life to the dead sinner and turning him from his iniquities.

Christ perfectly obeyed the law broken by men, and echoed back from humanity God's thoughts respecting sin and holiness. He offered, as our Representative, a perfect obedience, so that the Father beholding Him as the Son of Man, and for men, could say: 'I am well pleased.' He

could not as Divine, nor, as a perfect Man, offer the Atonement of *remorse*; for He 'knew no sin.' But He did suffer on our behalf many of the consequences of sin—physical infirmities, social wrongs, the malignity of the wicked, mental anguish, spiritual trials; and 'became obedient unto death.' Throughout His whole life His sympathizing human heart was oppressed with that just appreciation of sin for which His Divine nature rendered Him competent. Though sinless, He stood in the place of sinners, confessing their guilt; and thus 'His soul was made an offering for sin.'

Death was not forced on Him to satisfy God's justice, but was His joyful concurrence with God's love. Owing nothing on His own account, He ransomed those who owed 'ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay.' In the words of Diognetus in the first century, often cited, 'God Himself gave up His Son as a ransom for us: the Holy for the unholy; the Sinless for the sinful; the Immortal for the mortal; for what else but His righteousness could cover our sins? O sweet change! O unsearchable work! O unexampled benefit, that the wickedness of many should be covered by One righteous, the righteousness of One should justify many sinners.' His Divine nature gave infinite capacity for this great work, and infinite value to the work when performed. This was substituted for the punishment which otherwise

both justice and love demanded from the guilty, for the welfare of the Universe. The method of the forgiveness vindicates the Law. Its costliness declares both condemnation of sin, and Love in providing such a remedy. Thus reverence and gratitude are together promoted in the pardoned sinner. If he is taught the exceeding evil of the sin needing such Atonement, so he is assured most absolutely that the purpose of God has been fulfilled in 'so great Salvation.' The Atonement proclaims Him to be both Light and Love: establishing Law while saving the transgressor. If one company of Cherubim exclaim, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts,' another respond, 'for His mercy endureth for ever.'

Variations of theory may exist among those who possess the same stedfast faith. It has been truly said that all explanations of the Atonement have partial truth: Christ did die as a *Martyr*; as an *Example*; as a *pattern of Self-surrender*; to show *Sympathy*; as our *Representative*; to reveal the *Love of God*; to satisfy the claims of *Government*; to *make us good*. The Atonement fulfils all these purposes; but each is not all; and all are defective without this—'He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.'

Atonement is the first great lesson of the death of Christ. But there are many others. It is the brightest revelation of God, whose glory we see 'in the face of Jesus Christ' as Saviour of the

world. His death, as man for man, binds all men together in closest ties of brotherhood. His resurrection is a token of victory over the grave; His continued life, of our own immortality. All our study of the fact will not fathom 'the manifold wisdom of God'; the 'unsearchable riches of Christ'; the 'breadth and length and depth and height—the love that passeth knowledge.'

It has been wisely said that arguments for the fact of Atonement are not a chain which falls if one link is broken; but a net which still holds together though several portions of it may be defective. Readers of this book may question portions of it without destroying the evidence of the fact that Christ died to bring sinners to God.

However imperfect any explanation, the fact is independent of the theory. That Christ is the Propitiation for our sins 'means, at least, this much—that our repentance could not avail to obtain our pardon, were it not for what Christ has done and is doing for us;—or, that in the matter of our forgiveness, Christ is in some way, for some reason, interposed between us and God, and that through Him, because of Him, or as we express it in our prayers, "for His sake," penitent sinners are forgiven.' (Magee.) This preceded any theory, and multitudes have rejoiced in Salvation without any knowledge of the philosophy of it. 'The power of the great Sacrifice for the sins

of the world lies in itself, and not in our explanation. It is not the *doctrine* of the Death of Christ for human sin, but the Death itself, which has such wonderful power that it inspires faith in God, and purifies the heart.' (Dale.)

CHAPTER XV.

MISREPRESENTATIONS AND OBJECTIONS.

ENDEAVOURS to explain the profound mystery of the Atonement, so as to render it easier of belief, have often suggested other and still greater difficulties. Thus many persons have rejected Divine truth because of human mistakes; the pure light having been discoloured and distorted by the refracting and clouded lenses interposed. Opponents, seizing on such misrepresentations, have seemed to gain an easy victory, when they have merely refuted errors of interpretation. With much diffidence, therefore, fearing similar mistakes, the writer ventures to offer the following suggestions.

1. *It is objected that the purpose of Christ's death was subjective moral influence alone.*

Opponents of Atonement, insisting on a sinner's reformation in the future, make light of the guilt accumulated in the past. According to them, God might have forgiven the sinner as well without the

sacrifice of Christ as with it, provided only the sinful disposition were changed. The purpose of Christ's death was not, on this theory, to furnish a ground for the bestowment of pardon, but simply to be a power to turn man to righteousness. They say that God's anger is against sin alone, and ceases with it; that ceasing to sin is salvation, as by stopping the source of a torrent its streams cease to destroy. But this does not rebuild the ruin and replant the orchard. Repentance does not neutralise the offence, which is not merely a disease to be cured, but a crime to be punished.

The Scriptures that teach Atonement teach also reformation, as its necessary result, providing special incentives and power for producing it. Forgiveness by Atonement is the root from which, as branches, righteousness grows. The whole of the present volume is designed to meet this objection.

2. *It is objected that this doctrine represents God as angry.*

Hatred of wrong is inseparable from love of right. Righteous wrath is a phase of love. If pleased with what is lovely, we must be displeased with its reverse. Life would be intolerable if evil ceased to be repulsive. The moral universe would be in peril if the Ruler did not delight in those who obey His laws, and 'hate all workers of iniquity' while they cling to the sin He hates.

If it is pleaded that, judging from human nature, God must be merciful as we are, we reply that for

the same reason He must be angry as we are. We cannot give our highest commendation to a man, however generous, a woman, however tender, who does not feel indignation at ingratitude, tyranny, cruelty. The tenderer the benevolence, the sterner the condemnation. We lower God beneath His image, if we regard Him as cold intellect, without emotion either of loving approval or righteous displeasure.

Human beings in a healthy moral condition are angry at crime, and desire the punishment of the criminal. We are sorry and often indignant if law is evaded. We justify such anger by the approval of our moral consciousness, and the interests of Society. Otherwise we should be showing more compassion for the breakers than for the keepers of Law, for the perpetrators than for the victims of wrong.

If we feel righteous indignation when we only *hear* of some *single* crime, what must be the feeling of Him who is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' when He actually *witnesses* all the atrocious actions committed, and knows all the abominable thoughts encouraged at every moment, throughout all ages! Must not His holiness and love compel anger?

But the Atonement teaches that His anger is against those who violate the laws of love only while so doing. 'He waiteth to be gracious' to all who turn from their wickedness. 'Have I any

pleasure in the death of the wicked?' If some have misrepresented the wrath of God, many more have erred in speaking of Him as of a human being simply good-natured. The wrath of God is solemnly reiterated and awfully illustrated in Scripture. The Israelites were warned, 'Lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you.' This was seen in the Flood, at Sodom, and in other judgments. And while the New Testament teaches that 'God is Love,' it also teaches that 'wrath and indignation shall be on every soul of man that worketh evil,' that Christ came to 'deliver us from the wrath to come,' and that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

None ever warned against wrath so emphatically as He who died to save sinners from it. Of cities that had seen most of His mighty works He said, 'It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.' To the hypocritical Pharisees, 'Woe unto you, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?' In tender compassion He 'wept over the city' against which, in righteous retribution, He at the same time denounced the awful destruction its sin was preparing. To the finally impenitent the Judge is represented as saying, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Denial of the wrath of God against sin impairs belief in His mercy. It is right to punish when

justice demands it, and therefore it cannot be merciful to abstain from necessary infliction. Anger against evil is a phase of the Love that upholds Righteousness and blesses the universe.

The death of Christ did not exhibit the wrath of God against the Sufferer, who was always His 'well-beloved Son'; nor personal wrath against sinful men, towards whom He is ever 'merciful and gracious,' and for whose salvation Love provided this Atonement; but towards sin itself, a most emphatic proclamation to the universe that it is the abominable thing which God hateth; the most earnest warning to avoid that which needed such Atonement; the most loving assurance that He who provided it will pardon all who accept it. The wrath of God is felt only towards the sin that opposes His loving desire for the world's welfare, and was displayed on the cross to deter from the practice as well as to save from the penalties of it. 'There is a wrath of God which is kindled by the flame of love.'

3. *It is objected that the Atonement represents Christ as appeasing the wrath of God.*

This heathenish notion may be suggested by some disused hymns, and figurative utterances of excited rhetoric, but it is nowhere to be found in the Bible. Apostles, whose constant theme was the Love of God as revealed in the cross, could not have entertained a conception so contradictory. It is culpable that in spite of reiterated abjurations,

such caricatures should continue to be exhibited. We protest against the monstrous notion that the death of the Son appeased the wrath of the Father. Heathen sacrifices were to placate vengeful gods surpassing men in every vice. This sacrifice of Christ was offered not by men to God, but by God for men; not to appease wrath, but reveal love; not exacted, but provided by God.

We are not taught that God loves the world in consequence of the death of Christ, but that His death was the consequence of that precedent love. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' The gift was the *expression*, not the *cause* of love. 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'—not because of wrath soothed, but of a loving purpose accomplished. 'I came to do the will of Him who sent Me' (John iii. 16, 17; vi. 29, 38–40; viii. 29; xvi. 26–28; xvii. 1–4; Luke ix. 31, 35).

Christ is the brightest manifestation of God's love, not the satisfaction of His wrath. He reveals the Father, not as changing Him, but showing Him to be what He always was. He said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Let us behold Him as He blesses the children, touches the leper, leads the blind for cure, delivers to the mother the raised-up son, weeps at the grave, laments over Jerusalem, prays for His murderers, dies for the world, and let us in such actions see the Father. The greatest proof of the love of God was in

giving His Son a voluntary sacrifice for the salvation of the world. 'The Father who dwelleth within Me, He doeth the works.' We see God when we behold His beloved Son dying for the sin of the world.

Instead of seeing three distinct parties in the Atonement—the trembling sinner, an angry Judge, and the reconciling Saviour, we are taught that 'God was in Christ,' not being conciliated by another, but 'reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' The Atonement is thus not the appeasing of wrath, but the manifestation of love.

4. *That the Atonement represents God as less merciful than men.*

It is our duty both to be angry and merciful; to resist wrong, while kind to the wrong-doer. How can these duties harmonise? We hand over to the magistrate the duty of maintaining law, and reserve to ourselves the privilege of showing mercy. God is One, and cannot separate the two functions. How can He forgive without damage to righteousness? How vindicate righteousness while forgiving wrong? Our not demanding reprisals for personal injury is distinct from not punishing offences against public safety. Even a parent should not so pass over the fault of one child as to injure the whole family. Pity for a culprit is compatible with maintaining law for the interests of society. The Atonement solves the problem. God, vindicating

His own law in the person of His Son, does homage to righteousness and justice to the Mediator when He forgives the penitent transgressor. The requiring of satisfaction to justice, and Himself providing it, illustrates rather than disparages the wise and wide mercifulness of God.

He who knows all the calamities which sin may entail, manifests in His method of forgiving it, no less than in His threatenings against it, His care for His great family. Pardon without Atonement would not in the same degree benefit the sinner in deepening repentance, calming anxiety, and prompting obedience. The Atonement, instead of eclipsing the mercy of God, unveils it. The love that requires it bestows it. Provision for pardon does not wait for, but precedes the petition for it. The path for the prodigal's return is prepared before he says, 'I will arise and go to my father.' Divine mercy thus surpasses human.

5. *That the Atonement represents God as unjust.*

If sufferings undeserved are unjust, so is pardon undeserved. Justice demands the impartial execution of righteous law in protecting the innocent and punishing transgressors. Penalty exacted from the innocent, and immunity for the guilty, are alike unjust. If objectors approve of pardon without atonement to Law, they should not object to pardon, through voluntary suffering by the innocent, effected without detriment to Law. They retort that if it would be unjust to pardon without

Atonement, it must also be unjust to punish without guilt. We repeat that Christ was not *punished*; He was neither guilty, nor the object of displeasure, nor compelled to suffer: He gave His life freely, it was His delight to fulfil His Father's pleasure by obedience unto death, and so to redeem the world. Whatever the view taken of Atonement, the sufferings of Christ as martyr, teacher, example, were equally undeserved and open to the same objection. 'If it be consistent with the justice of God to appoint an innocent and Divine person to suffer in order to assure us of the truth of His heavenly mission, to manifest His Father's love, or illustrate self-sacrifice; why may it not be consistent with the justice of God to appoint such a Person to suffer in order to exempt sinners from the penal consequences of their transgressions?' (Crawford.)

Life is full of sorrows, borne by the innocent through the faults of others: parents, friends, philanthropists, thus suffer. Christ so suffered, not only by sharing, but by removing the consequences of sin. If objectors do not think it unjust that Christ should suffer as a martyr to Truth, why unjust as the Saviour of the world? If, having no sins of His own, He did not suffer for those of others, He suffered for no sins at all. If suffering for no sin would be just, why object to suffering for the sins of others in order to save? If the death of Christ, not being needed as Atonement, was only to manifest love, why should love manifest itself in so great

suffering without such necessity? If it is difficult to think of God approving such death to meet such necessity, much more in the absence of it. It would indeed be unjust for a ruler to *compel* an innocent person to suffer in place of the guilty, but there would be no injustice in allowing an innocent man gladly to surrender his one life to save the lives of millions of the guilty; especially if thereby not only the interests of Law were secured, but those guilty persons became good citizens, and spent their redeemed lives in their country's service.

The Atoning Saviour suffered no injustice from His Father, since He not only was a voluntary sufferer, but was not permanently a loser. In His humanity which suffered, 'God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.' The more that heroes suffer, the more they are honoured. Christ 'for the joy set before Him endured the cross': not a selfish joy in personal exaltation, but delight in the salvation of sinners. The innocent Sufferer is crowned with glory and honour, while we, through Him, are partakers of eternal life. Both the Saviour and the saved rejoice together (John xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 9; xii. 2; Col. i. 14–20; Phil. ii. 6–11; Rev. i. 5–7, 12–18; v. 6–13).

The Atonement is in accordance with justice, not only because, by the death of Christ, it meets all demands for punishment, but because of the perfect obedience He rendered in the place of man's disobedience. Law is honoured not merely by paying

the penalty of transgression, but by supplying the lack of obedience. Not only is payment made of the sinner's debt to justice, but justice itself is put into debt by the infinitely precious obedience of the Mediator. Justice should reward merit as well as claim penalty for demerit. If the latter was met by Christ's death, the former was acquired by His obedience. He was under no necessity to submit to human obligations, but 'He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto the Law,' in its fullest demands, even unto death. This obedience of supererogation acquired infinity of merit by the union of the Divine nature with the Son of Man.

No other righteousness could be adequate to supply the immeasurable defect. 'There was no other good enough,' not only 'to pay the price of sin,' but to fill the measure of righteousness. 'If through the one man's disobedience many became sinners, even through the obedience of One shall the many be made righteous.' This righteousness is presented to justice as a claim in the place of man's lack of righteousness, his penalty for which has been met by the death of Christ. Thus the Atonement establishes justice rather than contravenes it, both by satisfying its claims against the guilty, and by giving the guilty a righteous plea, on the ground of the perfect obedience of their Representative. Justice is honoured while mercy is bestowed.

Atonement by substitution has been illustrated by the supposed conduct of the chieftain of a clan

in rebellion against the prince to whom he himself is loyal. Loving them, he grieves for their conduct; in their behalf makes submission, and offers himself as a substitute to Law. If human justice forbids such transfer, the human conscience feels that the offer is true to what is best in humanity. Christ's grief and death for us prove that He is all that a perfect man ought to be. 'Regard His death not solely as satisfaction to inexorable justice, but as expression of a perfect Being's abhorrence of evil,' together with compassion for evil-doers, and 'we can see, how, as perfect Man, He would desire thus to die for His brethren, and how God would permit and even desire that He should do so,' especially when God 'has restored life by taking it, and proclaimed that death, true penalty for sin, was the means whereby sin should be slain, the only true pathway to any true life for man[1].'

6. *That Christ suffered only to show Divine Love.*

It is difficult to understand how such sufferings display love, unless undergone for some positive advantage. Useless self-sacrifice does not commend itself to our admiration. A mother dies by a contagious disease contracted in nursing a son who recovers by her devotion: he must always be impressed by memory of such love: but it was love with a practical purpose. Would it equally influence his life if she had risked health and life without any view to his comfort or recovery? Would a man

[1] *The Atonement.* Rev. J. J. Lias. Lect. IV.

demonstrate love by entering his brother's sinking boat only to sink with him, instead of with the object of preventing that boat from sinking? If love might rush through the flames merely to share the fate of one beloved, love would be more wise and impressive if the risk were incurred in extinguishing the flames and rescuing the victim. There is no virtue in self-sacrifice, unless for some advantage to others. Loss, pain, suffering, death, are in themselves evils; not only injurious to the sufferer, but when of no benefit to others may be morally wrong when volunteered.

'How should the sufferings of Christ be emphatically proofs of His Father's love, if not in themselves instrumental in obtaining substantial benefits, or how could we derive from them any better ground of assurance than we previously had, that God is willing to be at peace with us? The sufferings of Christ are well calculated to convince us of the love of our Father, when we view them as means of procuring blessings which God did not deem it consistent otherwise to bestow.' Self-sacrifice for its own sake as our duty, and pleasing to God, 'is inconsistent with any view of the Divine character which either reason or revelation has unfolded; and is much less akin to the nature of that wise, holy, and gracious God in whom we are taught to believe, than to that of the capricious and cruel divinities of heathenism, who were held to delight in aimless austerities and tortures.' (Crawford.)

But the absolute refutation of this hypothesis is presented in the positive and repeated declarations of Christ and His Apostles, as adduced in previous chapters. Christ in suffering did show forth the Father's love, but it was love, in suffering endured to save us from sin and woe.

7. *That Atonement is inconsistent with Immutability.*

God is unchangeably righteous. To remit punishment without either exacting penalty, or in some equivalent manner showing displeasure at sin, *would* be a change. God illustrates immutable perfections in varying methods. Differing substances may reflect the same light. Changing seasons display the unchanging Creator. He carries forward His immense designs in modes which may appear to us variations, but which are the evolution of an unalterable plan. God always has condemned and punished sin. He has always upheld the law of righteousness. The Atonement testifies to the justice and mercy which have always been essential attributes of God. The revelation has varied, but not the truth itself. The quantity and strength of the light reaching the earth has changed, but not the Sun of Righteousness. Under all dispensations there has been fundamental agreement. 'Prophet and evangelist and apostle proclaim, each in his appointed and successive measure, the great complex truth that there is for the penitent the fullest, freest pardon, and also that this pardon has been

procured for him by the atoning sacrifice of his Saviour Christ.' (Magee.)

An important change does indeed take place, when, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' But this is a change in our relation to Him, not in His purposes towards us. It is not that the light has now begun to shine, but that we have passed out of darkness. By faith in Christ we leave the eternal shadow for the eternal sunshine, but God remains 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

It has been objected that pardon was, in the Old Testament, offered to penitents without mention of Atonement. But silence is not denial. One aspect of truth is not contradicted by the presentation of its supplement. Repentance has always been the *condition* of pardon, Atonement the *ground* of it. The revelation of pardon preceded that of the sacrifice which made it possible. The testimony of David that 'the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,' and that of St. John, 'Christ is the propitiation for our sins,' are equally and unchangeably true.

God did not refrain from forgiving sinners till Christ died. The Lamb was 'slain from the foundation of the world' in the loving purpose of the Father. For ever unrolling was the parchment on which pardon had been ever inscribed. Thus St. Paul says that we are 'justified through the redemption that is in Christ, whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood,

to show His righteousness, because of *the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God*' (Rom. iii. 24–26). So that in the 'aforetime,' in all ages, God was both righteous and merciful, this being now shown in the Atonement, whereby in all ages, known or unknown, sins repented of have been forgiven.

8. *That Atonement arrays the Divine attributes against each other.*

Viewed in one aspect, God is just: in another, merciful. Could we comprehend the Infinite with one glance, we should see every attribute blending with every other, to constitute a perfect whole. The justice is ever merciful, the mercy is ever just. It is not justice which is the agent at one time, love at another; but God Himself, the Indivisible, at all times, in all His works. 'The light of the sun can be divided into all the various hues of the rainbow, and we can make each of these the object of distinct attention; but it is the combination of them all that constitutes the glorious element, of which its colourless purity is the prime excellence. God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all.' (Wardlaw.) Christ is the manifestation of both rectitude and goodness. There is no opposition between the righteousness which demands satisfaction and the love which provides it. God is not just *although* the Justifier: but the Atonement shows Him *to be just and the Justifier*. Christ is not a barrier opposing the stream of justice, but a

channel by which it flows to fertilise instead of to destroy.

When there is no regard for justice, mercy is indifference. Each shines effulgent in the light of the other. God is righteous, and the cross exhibits His hatred of sin: God is gracious, and the cross proclaims His love to the sinner. Had not justice demanded it, that sacrifice would have been wanton: had not love provided it, that sacrifice would not have been offered. At the cross 'Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.'

9. *That Atonement represents Christ as punished.*

At the risk of repetition, in reply to a frequently repeated objection, we say that punishment implies guilt in him who suffers it, and displeasure in him who inflicts it. An innocent person cannot share the *faultiness* of another, although he may endure some of its evil *consequences*. Though Christ was 'made sin for us,' He 'knew no sin' Himself, and could not share ours, and therefore His sufferings could not be penal.

Nor was He ever regarded by the Lawgiver with displeasure. The voice from heaven declared, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' immediately after He with Moses and Elias had been conversing on the 'decease at Jerusalem.' In His great agony He invoked God as 'Father.' When crying out as one forsaken He said, '*My* God!' He died saying, 'Father, into Thy hands

I commend My spirit.' As He neither shared our guilt nor the Divine displeasure, He was not *punished*; though He died that we who merited punishment might be saved.

10. *That the Atonement involves a 'legal fiction.'*

Pardon does not transfer our guilt to Christ, nor His righteousness to us. He remains faultless; and we, who were sinners, are delivered from the consequences of our sin. God sees both exactly as they are, but treats the sinner otherwise than he deserves, because the Sinless One has suffered in his behalf. Transfer of legal consequences is possible without transfer of character, which is impossible. St. Paul did not become guilty of the fault of Onesimus when he wrote to Philemon, 'If he oweth thee aught, put that to mine account.' God cannot see anything otherwise than it is, but He does, by the substitution of 'the Just for the unjust,' treat us otherwise than we deserve, and make us other than we once were. The holy Jesus does not, with His pardon, part with any of His purity, nor receive any of our sinfulness; but by His Atonement we do escape the fatal consequences of our sin, and so His righteousness is said to be imputed to us. And when we believe in Him God sees us, not as being what we formerly were, but what we *now* are; 'turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God'; 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works, sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.'

11. *That Atonement abrogates the eternal connexion between sin and death.*

Christ showed that even under a special act of sovereign grace, death must be conjoined with sin. Thus we, though sinners, may live—but only because Christ, our Substitute, died. Moreover we can only share in this immunity by becoming identified, through faith, with Him who died. We are crucified with Christ. And in this very act of faith sin ceases to be the law of our existence. Those who continue in sin, continue in death. They who escape death do so by dying with Christ a death to sin and a new life unto holiness; illustrating the eternal connexion of sin and death.

12. *That the sin of Adam could not be atoned by another and greater sin.*

Wicked men naturally hated Christ. But God overruled their cruel designs to effect His loving purposes. The Jews were guilty instruments in effecting results not of their own purpose. 'Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay' (Acts ii. 23). But there was a striking congruity between the manner and the purpose of His death, the former illustrating the magnitude of the evil which the latter was designed to remedy. At the cross, human depravity was exhibited in its deepest shades, and divine love in its strongest light. It was fitting that thus the disease and the remedy should be

exhibited together, associated, but not blended; the greatest act of mercy being performed in connexion with, and as a remedy for, the worst excesses of wickedness.

13. *That the same penalty due from sinners cannot be borne by Christ.*

The doctrine of Atonement does not teach this. Part of the penalty is remorse, and this cannot be felt by a sinless Being: part is eternal death, which cannot be shared by Him who is 'The Life.' He did die bodily, but this part of the penalty has not been removed, for it is still 'appointed unto men once to die.' Nor did He undergo the same amount of suffering which would have been endured by the whole sinful race. But He did fulfil that which otherwise would have required our punishment. His sufferings were vicarious, not because they were identical, but sufficient. He so stood in our place as to remove obstacles to our forgiveness. We may be saved, not because an amount of suffering sufficient for the salvation of a certain number was endured, but because His Atonement made it consistent with righteousness that any sinner accepting that Atonement may be saved (Rom. iii. 21–26; Eph. i. 6, 7; 1 Tim. iv. 10).

But such salvation is still a free gift, and not to be demanded as a right. The announcement of a benefit to be bestowed on certain conditions does not turn a donation into a debt. Though we ask in the confidence of faith, we must come as

undeserving penitents, not saying, 'Pay me what thou owest,' but, 'Have mercy upon me a sinner.'

Nor is the punishment of the impenitent double payment. They remain under their former load of debt, which is increased by the rejection of such mercy, as when an earthly father's appeal to a prodigal child is disregarded. If the son of some monarch volunteered at great risk and cost to go as ambassador to a province in rebellion, proclaiming an amnesty, the monarch would not be chargeable with inflicting double punishment on those who refused to lay down their arms. So the condemnation of persistent sinners is the necessary consequence of continued sin, and not repayment of a debt already discharged.

14. *That Atonement implies failure in the case of those who perish.*

The brazen serpent was God's method of curing all who trusted His word, and if one alone had been healed it would not have been uplifted in vain. If even all had refused to look, it would still have been an exhibition of Divine clemency. So the sacrifice of Christ is a foundation for the mere *offer* of mercy. Eternal life obtained by even one sinner would prove that the blood of Christ had not been shed in vain. But nothing more was necessary for the salvation of the whole world. The great gulf between man and God could not be crossed but by a bridge of Divine construction and infinite strength. Countless hosts may pass along it, and it shall re-

main unimpaired; but as nothing less would have sufficed if but one sinner was to be saved, the refusal of any to escape by it cannot render one of its stones useless.

15. *That Atonement, needed for all, is limited to a few.*

To meet the objection that the Atonement has failed in the case of those who perish, some have taught that it was provided for those alone who are actually saved, and therefore has in no case been provided in vain. This has raised objections to the Atonement itself, on the ground of partiality to the few and unmercifulness to the many. The testimony of Scripture is emphatic, that Christ offered Himself as 'the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world.'

God is represented as *desiring* the salvation of all. The solemnity of an oath confirms the assurance. He 'sware by Himself.' 'As I *live*, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,' &c., 'God our Saviour will have all men to be saved,' 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (Ez. xxxiii. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9; &c.).

Salvation is *provided* for all. The language in John iii. 16, 17 is explicit. 'God so loved *the world* &c. that *whosoever* believeth should have everlasting life.' 'He is the Propitiation for our sins, and also for the whole *world*' (1 John ii. 2). It is

co-extensive with the ruin it was to remedy. '*All* we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us *all*' (Is. liii. 6).

It is *sufficient* for all. If 'God was in Him, reconciling the world unto Himself,' the Atonement He provides must be adequate for its object. None can measure the 'Mighty God'; and no arithmetic can count 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

Salvation is *offered* to all. Old and New Testaments re-echo the invitation. 'Ho! every one that thirsteth!' 'Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour!' &c. 'He that will, let him take the water of life freely' (Is. lv. 1; Matt. xi. 28; John vii. 37; Rev. xxii. 17; &c.). Could 'the Faithful and True Witness' call to a feast those for whom there was no provision?

Christ commanded His Apostles to 'preach the Gospel to *every creature*.' They were to carry 'good news' not only to the human race in general, but to every individual in particular. But could the Gospel be *good news* to every one unless *provided for* every one? Nay, it would not be good news to *any one*, unless those for whom alone it was provided were infallibly marked out. If it were announced to a hundred criminals sentenced to death that half their number were pardoned, but their names not given, each one would fear he was excluded.

We are told of some perishing for whom Christ died. 'Shall the weak brother perish *for whom*

Christ died?' 'There shall arise false teachers, *denying* the *Lord that bought them*, and bring upon themselves swift destruction' (1 Cor. viii. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Heb. x. 29).

Repentance and faith are *enjoined* on every one. 'Let the wicked forsake his way. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. God commandeth all men everywhere to repent. This is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ,' &c. Jesus preached, 'Repent ye, and believe in the Gospel.' St. Peter at Pentecost said, 'Repent, every one of you' (Is. lv. 7; 1 John iii. 23; Mark i. 15; Acts ii. 38; &c.). If every one is commanded to repent and believe, it is obvious that pardon and salvation are provided for every one.

All are condemned who reject this Salvation (John iii. 18, 19; Heb. x. 28, 29).

If the Atonement by Christ was not adequate for those who perish, there was no Christ for them, and therefore they could not be guilty for not believing in what did not exist. But, 'This is the judgment, that the Light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil' (John iii. 19).

The fact that it is God who has provided a remedy for a universal evil implies that the supply is equal to the necessity. That the Mediator is Divine implies that His efficacy is unlimited. The unwillingness of some to leave their prison does

not alter the fact that the door is open for escape. Rejection does not disprove the gift. Infant children, and all, 'in every nation who fear God and work righteousness, are accepted with Him,' and saved through the same Atonement for the sin of the world, though in this life ignorant of it (Acts x. 34, 35; Rom. iii. 25; Rev. v. 9; vii. 9).

'Was Christ a ransom for non-Christians? Undoubtedly. Why then did they not believe? Because they would not. But His part was done' (Chrysostom). 'God shows Himself propitious to the whole world; wherefore all men, without exception, are exhorted to believe in Christ' (Calvin). 'He offered so full a ransom that if there were never so many to be saved, there needs no addition' (Howe). 'Our commission is to offer salvation, certain salvation, to every one of you, to the worst, to drunkards and swearers and thieves, yea, to the despisers of salvation' (Baxter). 'All ought to be invited to come to God through this all-sufficient Atonement; and all who accept this invitation are as much "partakers of Christ" as if He had died on the cross for them alone' (Scott). 'It is on the stepping-stone of a universal offer that each man reaches his own particular salvation' (Chalmers). 'The Gospel tells every sinner that there is atonement for *him*, pardon for *him*, salvation for him' (Wardlaw). 'Christ made on the cross a sufficient sacrifice *for the sins of the whole world*' (Liturgy).

16. *It is objected that Atonement is made to rest on a brief event which occurred long ago and far away.*

The importance of this truth is the apology for again referring to it (see chap. ix.). In urging attention to the death of Christ too little prominence has sometimes been given to His continued Life. Atonement is not the event which took place at Jerusalem, but Christ Himself, who continually presents His sacrifice before the throne of God. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and HE IS THE PROPITIATION for our sins'; not the mere fact of the death, but *He Himself, now* not a historical event, completed and past, but a living Person, for ever accomplishing the Atonement.

Our Lord dwelt emphatically on His continued life. 'I lay down My life, that *I may take it again*' (John x. 17); as if He said, 'My love for you is seen not only in My dying for you, but in My willingness, as man, to resume life in your interest. I am not weary of this Mediatorship, so as to hasten to cast off My humanity, and cease to be your Advocate. I will return from Hades, and arise in the flesh, and as your brother ascend to heaven, and there present My glorified body with the marks of sacrifice on your behalf, and by My intercession and the work of My Spirit, complete in you the salvation which is deliverance from all sin.'

'It is expedient for you that I go to My Father; I will send you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever; I am with you always; I go to prepare a place for you.' '*This same Jesus*' ascended, lives on, and will return. The Apostles rejoiced in this assurance. 'It is Christ Jesus that died, yea, rather that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' 'The Forerunner is for us entered within the veil; a High Priest for ever, unchangeable; able to save to the uttermost, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession. Through His own blood He entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption; now to appear in the presence of God for us. We have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Let us then draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace' (Rom. v. 10; viii. 38; Heb. iv. 14–16; vii. 24, 25; ix. 11; x. 19–22, &c.).

As still engaged in mediatorial work He was revealed to St. John as 'He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels (ministers) of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.' He is also described appearing in heaven as 'a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.' Full of life and energy, but with memorials of sacrificial death. The death was an event past, the life was

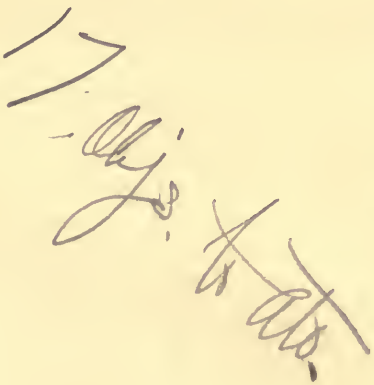
still going on, but not apart from the death; Jesus who once died, alive for ever to perfect the salvation of all who believe. Thus He is extolled in the celestial anthem, '*Worthy is* the Lamb that *hath been slain*' (Rev. v. 6–14).

Christ is thus in His own person and continued life our Propitiation. Having suffered for sin on the cross, He entered heaven to plead the cause of those for whom He died. As our High Priest, He still receives our confessions, confers absolution, presents to God on our behalf His own perfect righteousness, bestows His Holy Spirit to make us holy, reconciling us more and more to God, who through Him has been reconciled to us. He was 'delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.' On account of our sins He died as a sacrifice of Propitiation, that we might be forgiven; and lived again on account of our justification, that the purpose of God in our conformity to His righteousness might be accomplished by the continued agency of the ever-living Propitiation. The sacrifice of the cross to atone for guilt, accepted and avowed by the Resurrection, is daily presented to God as a memorial and a plea, satisfying Law and proclaiming Love, securing pardon of sin and purification of life. Not merely death, but life through death, was the Atonement; not merely the cross, but the crown it won; not merely forgiveness through the suffering, but triumph through the victory of Christ.

Thus we plead, not a historical fact and a doctrinal explanation, but our living Saviour on the Throne, to whom, 'alive for evermore,' we bring our daily homage of praise and services.

17. *That Atonement encourages sin.*

In the time of St. Paul and ever since some have objected to the Atonement as encouraging sin, by substituting the righteousness and the sufferings of Christ for the obedience and punishment of men, who may be tempted to say, 'Let us continue in sin that grace may abound.' To meet this objection, and illustrate the Apostle's protest, '*God forbid!*' is the purpose of the following chapter.



CHAPTER XVI.

ATONEMENT A POWER FOR PURITY.

DELIVERANCE from the penalty alone would not be salvation. The Christ was named Jesus, 'because He should save His people from *their sins*.' He demanded from all His followers a personal righteousness, summarised in the purest code of ethics—the Sermon on the Mount. His perfect life was a pattern to His adherents. 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me' (Matt. v.—vii.; Luke ix. 23; xiv. 26). The Apostles demanded, in His name, such practical righteousness. 'The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation, instructing us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.' 'Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works' (Rom. vi. 11–13; xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; xiii.; Tit. ii. 11–14).

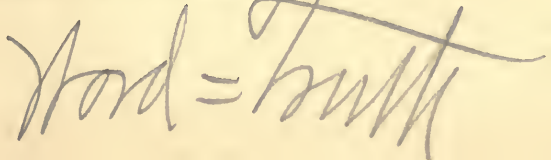
The demand for righteousness by the Gospel of Atonement is clear. But does it supply the power? Does it change the evil tendencies and cure the poisoned fountain? Christ taught the necessity of this. 'Ye must be born again.' And He produces it. To be saved, He tells us we must be 'born of the Spirit.' He came to bestow this heavenly producer of holiness. The Baptist, His forerunner and herald, said, 'He that sent me to baptize with water said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit; and I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.' Jesus claimed this power of bestowing the Holy Spirit when He said, 'He that believeth on Me, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive.' All who accept Him as the Propitiation receive from Him the Holy Spirit, whose influence is like that of a pure fountain within their own hearts, sending forth streams of holy thoughts, desires, motives, and conduct (Matt. iii. 11; John i. 33; iii. 1–8; vii. 37–39; xiv. 16; xvi. 7–11).

The special fulfilment of this promise was the first act of the Risen Christ, when St. Peter, linking pardon with the Spirit of Holiness, said, 'Repent ye, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;'—and three thousand re-

nounced their sins. This work of reformation was ascribed to Him who atones. 'This Jesus, whom ye crucified, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this' (Acts ii. 33–42).

Apostolic teaching constantly links the gift of the Spirit with the atoning Sacrifice, and the reception of pardon with the purity the Holy Spirit produces. 'Christ redeemed us . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith . . . the renewing of the Holy Ghost, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' It is 'through the Spirit' that we 'mortify the deeds of the body.' We are 'chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit: walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is love.' Holiness is thus inseparable from receiving the Atonement. The hand that grasps the *pardon* of sin is impelled by the Spirit who prompts to the *conquest* of sin. Because 'He worketh within us both to will and to work,' we 'work out our own salvation' (Gal. iii. 13, 14; v. 16–24; Eph. ii. 10; iii. 16, 17; Phil. ii. 12, 13; Tit. iii. 5–8).

This power for holiness helps us to obey the Truth which teaches it. Our Lord prays, 'Sanctify them through Thy Truth, Thy word is Truth.' He was Himself 'The Word' revealing God to men. The gospel of Atonement is the Truth specially adapted to make men holy, not merely in addition to forgiveness, but because of it.



Delivered from moral incapacity and despair, we are encouraged to exertion. Our prison doors being opened and our chains broken, we go forth from the pollution and darkness of the dungeon to 'cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.' The captive bound hand and foot cannot render service, but when set free he exclaims, 'O Lord, truly I am Thy servant, Thou hast loosed my bonds.' Liberation precedes, but as surely produces service. He who was so crushed with debt that a thousand years of toil could not perceptibly lessen it, may fold his arms in despair; but if assured that all his debts are cancelled, he at once feels an incentive to diligence.

Gratitude impels to righteousness. I was 'dead, but am alive again, I was lost, but am found. What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me?' The prodigal yearns to please Him who sent his well-beloved Son to bring him home. He who died for me says, 'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments,' and I exclaim, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' 'There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared'—the filial fear that shuns whatever may displease a loving father.

Gratitude for salvation is increased by contemplating the means by which it is bestowed. If forgiven, I owe it to 'the blood which cleanseth from all sin.' If restored to God, I was 'reconciled

by the death of His Son.' If I rejoice in hope, 'He died for us, that we should live together with Him.' Love, more potent than fear, prompts obedience in those who are now 'not their own, but bought with a price.' 'We love Him because He first loved us.' 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Since, in Christ's death, believers died, and in His resurrection rise to newness of life, can we plead His death as excuse for continuing to sin? 'God forbid! We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteouness unto God' (Rom. iii. 24, 25; vi.).

Those who accept Christ as their representative not only plead His obedience for the pardon of their defects, but acknowledge it as representing what they themselves ought and strive to do. Acceptance of Christ to escape from penalty is a pledge to imitate His purity, and by constraint of love secures obedience more complete than mere law could compel. Thus the death of Christ was a work not only *for* man, but *in* man: not lowering righteousness to our level, but lifting us up to the righteousness of God. Salvation by faith, instead of excusing sin, condemns and conquers it; true faith being the sinner's response to God's love and righteousness, exhibited by man's representative.

This is the argument of St. Paul in the Epistle

to the Romans. Having shown that the law could not *justify*, he then in the seventh chapter showed its inability to *sanctify*. 'O wretched man that I am!' Then he rejoices that 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus'; not only because they are pardoned through the Atonement, but because thereby they receive grace to conquer the sinfulness which the law condemned, but could not cure. The Holy Spirit given by Christ, and the motives of love inspired, enable the believer to attain a personal righteousness he failed to reach by law. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,' i.e. destroyed its power over those who believe in Christ, 'that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit,' i.e. the result of faith in Christ is practical holiness of life.

Atonement promotes, and in those who truly believe in Christ compels, that 'love which is the fulfilling of the law.' What stronger bond of brotherhood than this, that the same Redeemer died, and pleads before the throne, for all men alike! What an obligation to 'honour all men!' How can we despise, oppress, insult any who equally share with us the redemption of the cross!

'Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' The enmities of Jew and Gentile, of Greek and barbarian, should cease amongst those who are 'made nigh in the blood of Christ; for He is our peace, who made both one'; through whom we all have 'access in one Spirit unto the Father'; no more strangers, but fellow-citizens of the household of God. Thus the death of the Representative and Saviour of all men should bind all men together as a Divine brotherhood, by first drawing them together under the one Fatherhood. The problem of Socialism, Altruism, Humanitarianism, is solved by the cross. Belief of this would make war impossible, and the very thought of it hideous. There is much in nationality, race, language, to bind men together in patriotic affinity, but there can be nothing which has so strong a claim as community in the Atonement. Common love to the one Redeemer is the most binding influence to unite believers to each other, and should so compel love to all for whom the same Saviour died, that the all comprehensive law of righteousness would be observed, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

Thus the love of God is revealed so as to conquer man's indifference and enmity. Salvation is reconciliation—not by a merely external work done for us, but by bringing us into loving harmony with God and men; so that as the Divine nature

unites with the human in Christ, so we by faith are one with Christ, and so with God. Faith is 'the Amen of humanity to the righteous judgment of God.' It is the recognition and confession of our guilt, heartfelt sorrow for it, absolute renunciation of it, acceptance of Christ's own obedience, not as our excuse, but, while a plea for mercy, a pledge that we will copy it as the true model of our life, and the sign that we are partakers of His salvation. He saves us from the penalties of sin by bearing them for us; and from the power of sin by the grace of repentance, the constraint of love, and the help of the Holy Spirit (Matt. v., vi., vii.; John xv. 1–17; Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xiii.; Jas. ii., &c.).

In summing up this argument we are entitled to say that those who object to the Atonement as if it encouraged sin are ignorant of its nature, purpose, and results. The Atonement, instead of weakening love, establishes its foundations by asserting its just demands, by providing power for meeting them, and by the pardon of violations of it only in connexion with satisfying its claims. The standard of those claims is not lowered, but exalted by the Gospel. Sin is revealed as exceedingly sinful by the exceeding costliness of the ransom from its penalty. Practical holiness is insisted on by Him who is the Propitiation, and by His Apostles, as essential in all who are saved by it, and as a necessary result and evidence of

faith. Without detracting from the free gift of salvation, the motive of reward is not absent, inasmuch as although the saved by grace can have no legal claim, yet grace upon grace is given in the promise of recognition for all obedience and faithful service; and all such efforts are stimulated by the motive of loyalty to the Saviour—'Ye did it unto Me.' By the Atonement we obtain the help of the Holy Spirit, who inspires the love of holiness and enables the believer to practise it. By the Atonement we are released from conditions which rendered true service to God impossible, and gratitude prompts obedience. 'We love Him who first loved us.' The Love of Christ constraineth us. Love is the fulfilling of the Law. All who share in this Atonement are bound together by bonds of a love which fulfils all obligations to mankind. Thus the Atonement is not only a provision for pardon, but a power for purity; not only demanding righteousness, but producing it; the Sacrifice by which sin is forgiven realising its purpose only when sin is slain. 'Do we make void the Law by Faith? Nay, we establish the Law.' (Rom. iii. 31.)

CHAPTER XVII.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION.

THE reader is asked to excuse some repetition of topics in preceding pages which have set forth what is the basis both of Justification and Sanctification—the Atonement as the method of our pardon and our purity. It may be useful in addition to refer to that personal acceptance of the Atonement which at once secures what is termed '*Justification*,' in its connexion with the moral influence on character, which commences with Justification, but which is progressive towards perfection, and is termed '*Sanctification*.'

How can man be just with God? By obeying the Law, or by suffering its penalty. In the former he fails: by the latter he perishes. God Incarnate, in man's nature and as his representative, perfectly obeyed the Law, and suffered its penalty. By union with Him through faith we so share His fulfilment of Law that Justice is vindicated, while we are forgiven. Christ's righteousness atones for our lack

of it, and His death is substituted for our punishment. Law has no punitive claim on a sinner trusting in Him who 'was delivered up for our trespasses and raised again for our justification.' 'Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Rom. iii. 21–26; iv. 22–25; v. 1, &c.)

We plead His death in answer to the accusations of Justice; we present to God His righteousness in homage to the Law we have broken, and as a pledge by His grace to imitate it. Faith confesses our guilt, pleads His righteousness, and accepts His salvation, both to screen us from punishment and to make us good. We so adopt all He confesses and engages to do on our behalf, that we are identified with Him; and as the Father accepts Him, so we are accepted in Him. 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' Christ has borne our sins, not as sharing our guilt, but as removing from us the penalty; and we share His righteousness, as having the advantage, though not the merit of it.

Faith in Christ says, 'I confess for myself the guilt He confessed for the race, the justice which condemns it, the mercy which provides a remedy. I also accept the righteousness He wrought out, not only to cover my unrighteousness, but as a model and incentive for imitation. In His death I die to sin: in His resurrection I rise to a new life of righteousness: in His obedience I desire to share,

not only by imputation of legal benefit, but by impartation of moral influence to imitate it in personal self-surrender. Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief.' Such faith justifies; for the justice of God is acknowledged, His mercy accepted, His rule recognised, and the sinner reconciled. Thus we are justified, not continuing disobedient, but having become 'new creatures in Christ Jesus.' We are now sharers in His own life, as branches in a tree, as members in a body of which He is the Head, sharing His thoughts and purposes. 'Justified by faith, we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Thus Justification is virtually linked with Sanctification, its object and result.

We thus 'win Christ, and the righteousness which is of God by faith.' If Levitical sacrifices removed ceremonial pollutions, 'how much more shall *the blood of Christ*, who offered Himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works, to *serve the living God*?' We 'enter into the holiest by *the blood of Christ*,' and, cleansed from guilt (justified), are now permitted, inclined, enabled, impelled, to 'serve the living God' (Sanctification) (Heb. ix. 14). We '*know Him*,' i.e. accept His gift, acknowledge His authority: '*and the power of His resurrection*'; i.e. have been raised from the death of sin into a new life of holiness: '*and the fellowship of His sufferings*'; i.e. grief for sin, our own and that of others; '*being conformed unto His death*'; i.e. acknowledging we deserved death for

Justified = Service = Sanctified

the sins He bore, trusting in His Sacrifice, and being ready to die for His name (Phil. iii. 7–14).

Ancient sacrifices, whatever else their design, taught these two lessons—forgiveness in connexion with the death of the victim, and the surrender of our best to God. So the priceless sacrifice of Christ is a sure basis for our hope of pardon, and His perfect obedience both a plea and a pattern for our own righteousness. Faith relies on this 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'; accepting Him as our only Saviour both from the penalty and power of sin. Thus faith is more than assent of Intellect, it is compliance of Will; not conviction of a truth, but surrender to a Person. Atonement is more than a dogma for the mind, a creed for the tongue. Christ Himself is the Propitiation, and therefore Faith is surrender to Him; not admitting dead facts, but laying hold of a living Lord. There is such a union with Christ by faith, that in the sight of the Law we are regarded as if we obeyed and suffered in His person, and had risen with Him to a new life.

It is still more than this. It is such a union with Christ that we not only receive the pardon He procures, but Himself as our indwelling life; so that we approve, desire, and perform His will. 'I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me' (Gal. ii. 20, 21).

As shown in the preceding chapter, holiness results from conformity to Christ by faith. If we are 'members of His body, His flesh, and His bones,' how can it be but that we are sharers in His thoughts, His purposes, His will concerning us, and so be sharers in His righteousness, not only by the imputation which screens us from penalty, but as the daily desire of our heart and practice of our life? Such faith, though it can plead no merit as of works, is yet work of the most comprehensive nature, the germ of all future holiness. Jesus said, 'This is the *work* of God, that ye *believe* on Him whom He hath sent.'

By Atonement we are delivered from death, being *justified*; and spend our new life in serving God, being *sanctified*. In Justification our chains are at once broken, in Sanctification we run continuously and progressively in the way of God's commandments: the latter needing the former, the former prompting the latter. The pardoned sinner is admitted to the arena of the saints; not till then can he run the race; but then, he cannot be restrained, and presses onward towards the goal. Pardon and Purity 'are separate, but simultaneous. Like the two gases under the electric spark, they meet. There is a flash of light; and then a calm, pure river of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb' (Candlish).

St. Paul thus links Justification with Sanctification by the Atonement—'Christ Jesus was made unto

us from God, righteousness, and *sanctification*, and *redemption*.' 'But ye were washed, but ye were *sanctified*, but ye were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.' 'By grace have ye been *saved through faith*'—*Justification*: 'Created in Christ Jesus for good works'—*Sanctification* (1 Cor. i. 30; vi. 11; Eph. ii. 10).

St. Peter thus represents Justification as the producing cause of Sanctification. 'He bore our sins in His body on the tree'—*Justification*: 'That we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness'—*Sanctification*: 'By whose stripes ye were healed'—both by His cross. 'For ye were going astray like sheep, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls'—ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. 'Christ suffered for you'—*Justification*: 'That ye should follow His steps'—*Sanctification* (1 Pet. ii. 21–25).

Justification and Sanctification cannot be separated. Pardon is the fountain from which purity flows, the sunshine in which it lives. It is not a foundation on which a superstructure *may be reared*, but a healthy root out of which the tree *must grow*. So intimate is their association, that the Faith by which we receive Justifying grace is evidence that we are already under the influence of sanctifying power.

Forgiveness by the death of Christ is the objective fact of salvation; and justifying faith is the subjective fountain from which all streams of

righteousness flow. Instead of first trying to change ourselves to effect Sanctification, we must believe in Christ, by whom alone that change is wrought. Union with Him produces reformation of life. Removal of guilt in Justification not only precedes but produces Sanctification. We must live before we can work. 'Justification and Sanctification are the two glorious pillars which stand at the entrance of heaven, but the atoning death of Christ is the foundation on which both, and both equally, rest. Without this they stand on air. The Divine philosophy of the Word of God is this—without redemption there is no forgiveness, without forgiveness there is no sanctification of character and life, for there is no root of gratitude from which it can grow[1].'

[1] *Atonement in Relation to Pardon.* Enoch Mellor, D D.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WITNESS OF EXPERIENCE.

THE essential truth of the Atonement, as the foundation fact of Christianity, is that by the sufferings and death of Christ we obtain forgiveness of sin, and, as the result of such change in our condition towards God, experience such a change of character in ourselves that we conquer sin itself. This is a fact independent of varieties of theory, clearly asserted by Holy Scripture.

It has been shown in preceding chapters that sacrifices of the Old Testament did teach, symbolically, the forgiveness of sin. The prophets predicted the coming of the Saviour, and the death whereby Atonement would be accomplished. The writers of the New Testament referred to these sacrifices and quoted these predictions as fulfilled in Christ. The prophecy of Isaiah emphatically testifies not only to the death of Christ, but to its purpose—'He was wounded for our transgressions.' The Herald of Christ pointed Him

out as 'The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,' the real Sacrifice, given by God Himself, to deliver the world from the curse of sin.

Christ Himself taught this as the great object of His coming. He endorsed the statement of John by vindicating the Baptist's Divine mission. He said of Himself that He had come to give His life a ransom for many. He instituted a solemn feast in which the bread was to represent His body broken, and the cup the 'New Testament in His blood, shed for many for the remission of sins.'

Atonement as the Fundamental Fact of Christianity is testified in the perpetual celebration of this Christian Passover, instituted for this very purpose, to 'show forth the Lord's death till He come.' All who bear the Christian name, with very few exceptions, agree under various forms in thus bearing testimony to the fact that Christ died for the remission of sin. The Author is glad to confirm his feebler words by the following extract from a Sacramental address to students and pastors, by his honoured friend, the President of Cheshunt College:—

'Let us take the sublime fact which we commemorate, namely, the Sacrifice of the Incarnate Word for our sins, the Body broken, the Blood shed for us, and shed for the remission of our sins. . . . If by faith we grasp the unseen and eternal thing here foreshadowed, we come into direct

contact with an almost blinding light. The glory of God in the face of the dying Christ is so unutterably resplendent, that only the eye of faith can bear it; but if it be indeed the glory of God, then it is the outflashing upon us of that which is eternal, which was before all worlds, is now, and for ever. Infinite love and absolute righteousness, exhaustless pity and consummate sacrifice, the inflexibility of eternal law accepting the anomaly of humiliation and pain, the glorification of death in the agony of holy love, God at His very best, and as He is from eternity to eternity, breaks on our vision! The Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, stands before our inward eye. Our faith lays hold of these when we see Jesus. These outstretched bleeding hands, as we look on them by faith, become the everlasting arms, "mighty to save." It is this faith in the unseen and eternal that it is our function to evoke by all our ministries, of whatever kind. Only so far as we call it out, can we fulfil our course. Such a mission is worth living for, worth dying for[1].'

Our Lord, vindicating and applying to Himself the prophecies of Messiah as dying for sin, commanded His followers, saying, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name.' Obeying this injunction, St. Peter

[1] *Light and Peace.* Rev. H. R. Reynolds, D.D.

on the day of Pentecost exhorted the Jews at Jerusalem to 'Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.' St. Peter and St. John uniformly taught that salvation was to be obtained by faith in the crucified Saviour; whose 'blood cleanseth from all sin.' They who had habitually listened to the Great Teacher must have known what was the purpose of His death. From them St. Paul learnt the great truth he proclaimed in his preaching and letters. The Atonement he taught must have been the cherished fact and doctrine of the early Church. The words of the Apostles make it clear that they did believe and teach that 'Christ died for our sins.'

We have seen that the Atonement professes to relieve the conscience from guilty fear, and at the same time to encourage reverence for law, love to God, and cheerful obedience to His will; and thus to make us happy in the present life and hopeful for the future.

But a Divine Revelation should be certified not alone by credible testimony to supernatural facts and by intrinsic worth, but by experimental evidence testing and verifying its claims. 'A tree is known by its fruits.' Besides promising, does it actually confer benefits worthy of its Author?

Any religion claiming to be from God should supply three great necessities of the human soul:— relief from guilty fear; power to become good; and such knowledge of God as will enable us while

reverencing, to trust and love Him. Christianity certifies the need and supplies it. The Atoning Sacrifice emphasizes the fact of sin and the reasonableness of guilty fear; while it proclaims full and free pardon to every penitent, pardon is bestowed in such a way that while mercy is manifested Justice is honoured, while transgression of the Law is passed over, reverence for Law itself is strengthened. Acceptance of this pardon is accompanied by the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God whereby the sinner is 'born again.' A new life is imparted, so that the sin forgiven is also hated, and holiness becomes the desire of the heart and the aim of life. Gratitude for pardon so obtained prompts to glad self-surrender. The cost shows the sin to be exceeding sinful. In the very act of faith by which the burden of guilt is removed the power of sin is broken. Both Pardon and Purity are the result of a true acceptance of Christ crucified. God is so revealed to the soul that instead of being the object of guilty terror, He is trusted and loved. He not only forgives but embraces us as children, and gives us 'the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!'

We now contemplate the human life of Christ as a revelation of Himself. Jesus said, 'The Father that dwelleth within Me He doeth the works.' When Jesus folded little children in His arms, touched the leper, absolved the penitent, wept at the grave, He was revealing to us God. 'He that

hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' He is no longer to us Unknown and Unknowable. We see His glory in the life of Jesus Christ. We adore the holiness and justice vindicated on the cross, while rejoicing in the forgiveness so freely bestowed: sin is made hateful by our receiving the amnesty: the conscience, freed from the crushing burden of guilt, soars upward to the heaven of holiness and love: new creatures in Christ Jesus, we 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

No other religion and no philosophy thus recognises and supplies what our consciousness testifies to be the three great necessities of the soul. The Atonement does offer peace by pardon, purity by the motives such pardon inspires, and a knowledge of God which produces peace and love. But does reception of this truth actually produce such results? They are the logical and moral inference, but do facts verify the theory? Faith is not a mere dogma accredited, but a new life experienced. We know the truth by evidence stronger than logic, or criticism, or testimony, or miracle. We have the witness in ourselves. 'We know we have passed from death unto life,' 'We know Him whom we have believed.'

Condemned by conscience as well as by Scripture, guilty fear prompts the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' Are we told to amend our hearts and lives? The effort reveals more clearly the deadly evil. We learn the rancour of the disease

by our ineffectual efforts to cure it. Actions without a pure motive cannot avail, and this needs a pure heart. How can we create it? How trust and lovingly obey a God we reasonably dread? How by mere self-resolve change tendencies long indulged, and break habits perseveringly strengthened? Even were I henceforth to perform all duties aright, payment of a present liability cannot cancel a debt incurred in the past.

I may be told that these fears are nursery fables, or superstitious dreams. But they will not be silenced. When I think I have driven them away, they return like a swarm of gnats. Other comforters advise me to find peace in the service of Humanity, and I diligently pile up a barrier of good works to shut off the spectre. But it thrusts its threatening finger through the heap and says, 'I will meet thee at the judgment.' On a granite rock I see deeply inscribed the record of my sin. What must I do to hide it from my distressed vision? I cover it with cement, on which to inscribe the record of my virtues. But the frost and the storm break off the thin coating, and the record of guilt is again revealed clearly cut as before. What must I do?

I am directed to Christ as a perfect example of righteousness. But how can the obedience of another atone for my disobedience? It appals me by the contrast! I recognise it as the true ideal. That is what I ought to be—what I never have

been—what I never can become—wretch that I am—'who shall deliver me from this death?'

But when I am told that He obeyed on my behalf, that His perfect righteousness was to honour the Law I had broken; that He paid my debt, and died that I might live—then my burden falls off. I am roused from my despair, and I rejoice in pardoning mercy. Forgiveness breaks my fetters so that I am *able* to serve: the gift of the Holy Spirit *prompts* me to serve; the truth of the Gospel *strengthens* me in service, by the animating motive of love to my Deliverer. The Atonement causes me to honour my own nature, for which so great a work was accomplished, and also to honour my fellow-men of every condition, for whom equally such price was paid.

This is no fiction—it is absolute fact, experienced at the present hour by people of all conditions and all nations. It is not a statement of what *ought* to follow such beliefs, but what is the absolute conscious condition of the soul, and the actual character of believers. What is it that gives the anxious sinner peace—that calms his fears, kindles his love, animates his hope? 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin!' What is it that nerves him in the battle with temptation, that girds him with strength as he climbs the rugged path of obedience, that sustains his constancy in the furnace of affliction? 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me!' What is the chief motive to self-sacrifice in those

who most diligently labour for God and their fellow-men? 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' What is it that sustains the soul of the believer in the prospect of eternity? Be he scholar, peasant, child; one whose life has been unblemished, or stained with every vice; the reply of all will be substantially the same—'He bare our sins in His own body on the tree: and He is able to save to the uttermost!'

What has given success to preaching at home, and missions abroad? Not learning, genius, eloquence, however valuable such gifts; but the proclamation of Christ crucified; not the perfect example which He set us, but the complete atonement which He made for us. Where the terrors of the law and the praises of virtue alike have failed—Christ crucified, the embodiment and expression of Divine love, the tangible and priceless ransom which reveals both the depth of our guilt and the measure of that mercy which fathoms it—Christ crucified, the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of a guilty world—has softened the obdurate, and humbled the proud, and encouraged the desponding, and turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, a multitude that no man can number, out of every kindred, and people, and nation.

In confirmation of consciousness bearing witness to the Atonement, the Author again avails himself of the words of others.

'The world is weary with its cumbrous and futile methods of obtaining deliverance from sin.

. . . The fear of men is not hushed by being told that they should be virtuous and calm, that evil is an accident, and responsibility a dream. . . . The sin of the world presses upon conscience as a fault; hence its awful burden. From this springs the whole history of sacrifices and atonements. If sin is to be taken away from the world, the twofold process of redemption and renewal must be involved in the act. The conscience must be assured that the law has not been trifled with; that it is safe and right to believe that God is ready to forgive; that HOLY LOVE *is at the heart of the universe*; *that* GRACE *will reign through righteousness unto eternal life.* But more than this—the sin itself, as well as its natural consequences, must be expelled. There must be the new life, as well as the new relationship with God[1].'

'A feeling that man cannot make satisfaction to God for his own sin . . . is at the root of all the penances practised by heathen and Christian alike. Nothing can satisfy but the feeling that a Saviour has come who has discharged the debt no man was ever able to pay. It is this doctrine of Satisfaction that is the strength of Christianity. . . . A man has not to address himself to the hopeless task of clearing old scores before he can regard himself as free. He is free already' (Rev. J. J. Lias, M.A.).

A striking admission of the testimony of the

[1] *John the Baptist.* Congregational Union Lecture, 1874. By Henry R. Reynolds, D.D.

experience of consciousness is given by an eminent theologian who, though he argues in favour of Atonement by moral influence, yet confesses that the 'Evangelical' explanation is needed to secure that influence. 'Christ is good, beautiful, wonderful: His disinterested love is a picture by itself; His passion rends my heart. But what is He for? How shall He be made to me the salvation I want? One word—HE IS MY SACRIFICE—opens all to me; and, beholding Him with all my sin upon Him, I count Him my offering; I come unto God by Him, and enter into the holiest by His blood. . . . We want to use these altar-terms just as freely as they who accept the formula of expiation. Without them we seem after awhile to be in a Gospel that has no atmosphere. Our very repentances are hampered by too great subjectivity, becoming, as it were, a pulling at our own shoulders. Our very prayers and thanksgivings get muddled; courage dies; and so we sigh for some altar whither we may go and just see the fire burning, and the smoke going up, and circle it about with our believing hymns[1].'

Greeks may still sneer at the Gospel as 'foolishness,' and Jews may still demand 'signs,' but 'Christ crucified' is increasingly proved to be the 'Wisdom of God, and the Power of God.' If it be wisdom to seek the best ends by the best means,

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, Dr. Bushnell. *The Atonement*, Dr. Crawford, p. 377.

then the Gospel, producing righteousness and happiness wherever it is embraced, is 'wiser than men': and however condemned as 'weakness,' is 'stronger than men.' The word is ever being confirmed by 'signs following.' To the Jews the great miracles of Moses were signs: but the deliverance of the soul from worse than Egyptian bondage,—the opening of the way of salvation through impediments more threatening than the Red Sea; the bursting forth of the waters of repentance from the flinty heart; the writing of the Law of Love on the soul of every believer; and grace to press onward in spite of surrounding foes, in the assured presence of the Angel of Jehovah, to win the heavenly inheritance—these are signs more important, more numerous, constantly occurring in our own day, before our own eyes. The miracles of Christ were mighty signs; but the realities signified surpass the types—the spiritually blind who see, the deaf who hear, the lame who run in the way of God's commandments, the dead in sins who are quickened to a new life, not to return to the grave, as Lazarus, but who, believing in Christ, shall never die—these bear living witness.

The miracles of which Jesus said, 'Greater works than these shall ye do,' are being done wherever Christ crucified is faithfully preached. These moral transformations, varied and countless, can be explained only by the truth of the Gospel and the Spirit of God.

This self-evidencing power of the Atonement is limited by no geographical boundary, ethnological peculiarities, social distinctions, or intellectual qualifications. Children and parents, youth and age, peasants and philosophers, paupers and princes, savage and civilised, black man and white, 'Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free,' now, as at the first, everywhere, continually bear witness.

'Christ crucified' is the true glory of preaching. Learning, logic, rhetoric, wit, fancy, without the Gospel, are but 'sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.' They may attract crowds, win popularity, achieve what worldliness deems success, but do not of themselves constitute Gospel-preaching. Discourses without salvation by the cross may be brilliant orations or interesting lectures, but are not sermons at all. Would that to the pulpit more of such intellectual gifts were consecrated; but the pulpit with these alone might have Ichabod inscribed on it. The least cultured evangelist who lovingly proclaims the Saviour to perishing souls is a greater preacher than the most accomplished scholar or orator whose great aim is not to proclaim a crucified Christ to perishing souls. Oh, that of all who occupy the position of teachers in all Churches, it might be said, that they 'preach Christ crucified'!

As we began so we close with referring to the first Missionary to Europe of this Gospel. Christ was the Author of it, the eleven disciples the first

proclaimers of it, St. Paul its chief expounder and preacher. It gave offence both to Jews and Greeks. It meant *defeat*—the capture and death of its Leader. It meant *condemnation*—for He was charged with being an impostor, a blasphemer, a revolutionist. It meant a Leader *disgraced*—by a felon's death, public scourging, the ruffianly insults of priests, soldiers, and people, and the sharing the gallows with robbers and murderers. The cross was to Greeks foolishness, and also to Jews, to whom it was specially a stumbling-block, because it contradicted their ideas of the Messiah, and set at nought their exclusive traditions. They prided themselves on being alone the favoured people of God, with signs and privileges none others might share.

They gloried in the Law of Moses. Those who might have accepted the Gospel if preached only to Jews, and on condition that all Christian converts should adopt Judaism, persecuted it when proclaimed to Gentiles without such limitations. Had St. Paul submitted to their demands, in order 'to make a fair show in the flesh,' he would have calmed the jealous anger of the Jews and gained their applause. But nothing could induce him to make so base a surrender. Others might glory in ceremonial and bodily marks, but he would glory only in the cross. However much assailed by philosophical criticism, or ecclesiastical bigotry, or vulgar abuse, he would not hide, but proclaim it, not apologise for, but extol it, not explain it away, but

enforce it; not accommodate it to human philosophy, but demand for it Divine authority. It was not for him to conciliate critics, but to testify truth, not to please, but save the world. Therefore instead of whispering it he proclaimed it with trumpet-blast; instead of apologising for it he extolled it, he gloried in it, chiefly gloried in it, solely gloried in it; 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

And why? He appealed to his own experience in what it had enabled him to do in conquering the enemies of his soul. He did indeed glory in it as revealing the righteousness and love of God, the very shame of it emphasizing that love; and he gloried in it for all the truths it taught, and in the full salvation it promised. But he gloried in it because he himself had proved all this to be true in his own experience and history, saying, 'Through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

By the cross of Christ, by Christ crucified, the world had become to him as a man nailed to a cross, doomed, dying, worthless, practically dead. The world, whether praising, blaming, hating, was nothing to him. And by the cross he himself was to the world as one crucified, the world looking on him with contempt and scorn. So each regarded the other, the Apostle neither caring for the world, nor the world for him; he dead to it all, as it was dead to him. In other words, he was delivered

from the snares and temptations of the world, and indifferent to its opinion, frown, contempt, and hatred. Sin and self 'no longer reigned in his mortal body.' He had 'mortified,' put to death, corrupt inclinations and indulgence. He was 'crucified with Christ.' From his own experience of the sanctifying power of the cross he appeals to all who truly believe, 'They that are of Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof;' they share with Him both in death and resurrection; 'knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus' (Rom. vi. 1–11; viii. 13; Gal. ii. 20; v. 24; vi. 14; Col. iii. 5).

The highest aim of a believer is to conquer sin. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Beholding the love of God in the cross, contemplating Christ dying for our sins, and through that Atoning Sacrifice living for ever as our Mediator, this abiding, realising faith will overpower the world, whether it frowns or smiles, and enable us to sing, 'Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Must we not glory in this emancipation? Glory in that which sets us free from the world's debasing bondage? Glory therefore in the cross which crucifies the world?

Christ by the cross, having 'forgiven us all tres-

passes,' has 'quickened us together with Him'; by the cross He annulled the galling requirements of legality, and the heavy burden of guilt and penalty; 'blotting out the bond of ordinances that was against us, nailing it to the cross'; He took the record of our debt, discharged it, and nailed it to the cross; He took the sentence of our condemnation and nailed it to the cross, as undergone by Himself, and no longer valid against us; He took our old nature and nailed it there, no longer to rule over us, but put to death; 'and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it,' on that very cross of which some are ashamed.' We will therefore glory in it, adorned as it is with trophies of victory over the powers of darkness, with records of the salvation of countless multitudes in heaven and of other multitudes on their way thither singing, 'O cross, my only hope!' Earthly conquerors returning in triumph have gloried in the captives they have taken, the spoils they have won; and orators, poets, historians, have perpetuated their praise; but how contemptible all such triumphs compared with that of the cross, whereby Christ overcame sin, death, and hell! Had Christ come robed with sunbeams, encircled with the rainbow, heralded with thunders, attended by twelve legions of angels to the great battle—this would have been glorious, 'but to destroy death by dying, this is the glory of glories.'

Shall we be ashamed of the battle-field where such a victory was won, and such immortal benefits obtained? Were Spartans ashamed of Thermopylæ, or Athenians of Marathon, or Scots of Bannockburn, and shall those redeemed from the debasing tyranny of sin be ashamed of the cross? It is the conqueror's chariot, it is the Redeemer's throne, it is the pledge of salvation. The grave of the Crucified is the gateway of glory, the death on the cross is the anthem of the heavenly host. 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.'

No wonder that the Apostles, fresh from listening to the words and witnessing the sufferings of Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit, bore such testimony! No wonder they counted it all joy to suffer in proclaiming to all men that 'In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' No wonder that instead of hiding, disguising, apologising for this doctrine of the cross, they triumphed in it, saying with St. Paul, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.' No wonder that the Church of Christ still builds on it as its one foundation, that penitents cling to it, that Zion's pilgrims chant it on their way to the celestial city.

If in heaven saints and angels celebrate the glory of the cross in their anthem, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,' we will glory in it on our way to join them. We will anticipate the song of heaven. We will make the desert and the valley ring with

the same Hallelujah. Each successive hill we climb shall fling forward the strain. And as we sometimes by faith catch a note or two of their triumphant chorus, they, in the pauses of their anthem, shall catch a feeble echo of it from pilgrim bands below, as they 'join their cheerful songs' with those that rise around the throne, 'For He was slain for *us*.'

The general experience of believers in all ages bears testimony to the truth of Forgiveness through the Death of Christ. Whatever the varieties of ecclesiastical government, of external ceremonial, of theological theory, throughout the centuries since the great Sacrifice was offered, there has been essentially one confession by all who have embraced the Gospel. The testimonies of martyrs, the ancient liturgies and hymns of the Church, the utterances of the godly of all denominations, the unspoken emotions of human souls and the gathered voices of the great congregation, have shown that the Church of Christ is One in reliance for Salvation on Him alone who 'tasted death for every man.'

'When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the Glory of the Father. We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Unto

Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, be the glory and the dominion, for ever and ever. For Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing.'

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